

Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.

Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance

2011–12 School Year

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Prepared by:
Janice Ereth, PhD
Susan Gramling
Theresa Healy



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
for
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.
2011–12

This is the 14th annual report on the operation of Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc., a City of Milwaukee charter school.¹ It is a result of intensive work undertaken by the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC), school staff, and the Children’s Research Center (CRC). Based on the information gathered and discussed in the attached report, CRC has determined the following findings.

I. CONTRACT COMPLIANCE SUMMARY

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

II. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

A. Local Measures

1. Primary Measures of Academic Progress

CSRC requires the school to track student progress in reading, writing, and mathematics throughout the year to identify students in need of additional help, and to assist teachers in developing strategies to improve the academic performance of all students. This year, Downtown Montessori’s local measures of academic progress resulted in the following outcomes:

All (100.0%) pre-kindergarten and kindergarten student showed progress or reached proficient in all language and sensorial skills; 70 (98.6%) of 71 students showed progress or reached proficient in all math and/or practical life skills; and 65 (92.9%) of 70 students showed progress or reached proficient in all cultural skills.

Reading:

- Approximately 55.6% of first-grade students met grade-level benchmarks in oral reading fluency accuracy;
- Literacy for students in fourth through sixth grades improved in that 89.7% met the vocabulary goal; 100.0% met the oral reading fluency goal; and 61.3% met the grammar goal.
- Overall, 83.0% of students met the local measure goal in reading/literacy.

¹ The City of Milwaukee Common Council chartered seven schools in the 2011–12 academic year.

Writing: Overall, 81.6% (71 of 87) of first- through eighth-grade students maintained or improved their scores based on the Six Traits of Writing rubric.

Math: Overall, 73.2% (60 of 82) first through sixth graders reached proficient or showed progress on grade-level math skills.

Special Education Students: Twelve (85.7%) of 14 special education students demonstrated progress on their IEP goals.

2. Secondary Measures of Academic Progress

To meet City of Milwaukee requirements, Downtown Montessori identified measurable education-related outcomes in attendance, parent involvement, and special education student records.

The school met its goals in all of these outcomes.

3. School Scorecard

This year, the school scored 87.4% on the school scorecard.

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

Downtown Montessori administered all required standardized tests noted in their contract with the City of Milwaukee. Multiple-year student progress is described below.

- Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT) multiple-year advancement results indicated that all (100.0%) 26 students who were at or above grade level the previous year scored at or above grade level again this year.
- All 27 (100.0%) students who were proficient in reading in 2010–11 maintained proficiency as measured on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE).
- Eighteen of 21 (85.7%) students who were proficient in math in 2010–11 maintained proficiency as measured on the WKCE.

Two students tested below grade level on the SDRT, two scored minimal or basic on the WKCE in reading, and eight students were minimal or basic in math the previous year. Due to the small sizes of the cohort, results could not be included in this report.

III. SURVEY/INTERVIEW RESULTS

Every other year CRC conducts parent surveys and interviews board members, teachers, and students. Select results are as follows:

- Parents of 116 (69.1%) of 168 students responded to the survey. Of these:
 - » Most (94.2%) would recommend this school to other parents; and
 - » Seventy-three (84.9%) rated the school's overall contribution to their child's learning as "excellent."
- Seven of nine board members participated in interviews. Of these:
 - » All (100%) rated the school as "excellent" overall; and
 - » Several mentioned that the school should develop a plan to increase the population of the school.
- All nine instructional staff (eight classroom teachers and one reading specialist) participated in interviews. Of these:
 - » Four (44.4%) indicated that the school's progress toward becoming an excellent school was "excellent" and five (55.6%) of the teachers listed the school's progress as "good"; and
 - » Six (66.7%) rated the school's contribution to students' academic progress as "excellent" and the remaining three (33.3%) rated the contribution as "good."
- All 11 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students were interviewed. Of these:
 - » All (100%) indicated that they had improved in reading and math; and
 - » All said they felt safe in school.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The school addressed all of the recommendations in its 2010–11 programmatic profile and educational performance report. Based on results in this report and in consultation with school staff, CRC recommends that the school continue a focused school improvement plan by engaging in the following activities.

- Focus on improving math outcomes by identifying the best instructional practices and building teacher capacity.
- Continue to improve classroom physical environment.
- Continue to implement methods to identify "grade level indicators" that are aligned with the state standards in all areas of instruction. These indicators will be used for the RtI (Response to Intervention) model required by the State of Wisconsin with the Montessori approach, similar to the way special education is aligned with the Montessori approach.

- Develop a plan to increase the number of students at the school, particularly at the higher grades.

V. RECOMMENDATION FOR ONGOING MONITORING AND CHARTER RENEWAL

CRC recommends that Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc., continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting; and that the school be considered eligible for charter contract renewal.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared as a result of a contract between the City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee (CSRC) and the Children's Research Center (CRC).² It is one component of the program CSRC uses to monitor performance of all schools chartered by the city.

The process to gather the information in this report included the following steps:

- CRC staff visited the school in the fall and conducted a structured interview with the head of school. Critical documents were reviewed and copies were obtained for CRC files.
- CRC staff assisted the school in developing its outcome measures for the annual learning memo.
- Additional site visits occurred where classroom instruction was observed, and notes recorded on such issues as the classroom setup, number of students and teachers, and student engagement in learning activities.
- CRC staff read case files for selected special education students to ensure that individualized education programs (IEPs) were updated.
- CRC staff conducted interviews with a random selection of students, teachers, and members of the school's board of directors.
- CRC staff conducted a structured, end-of-the-year interview with the head of school and the executive director.
- CRC conducted a survey of parents of all students enrolled in the school.
- The school provided electronic data to CRC.
- CRC staff compiled and analyzed results.

² CRC is a division of the nonprofit National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD). NCCD promotes just and equitable social systems for individuals, families, and communities through research, public policy, and practice.

II. PROGRAMMATIC PROFILE

Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.
2507 South Graham Street
Milwaukee, WI 53207

Telephone: (414) 744-6005
Website: <http://downtownmontessori.com>

Head of School: Ms. Virginia Flynn
Executive Director: Mr. Ian Spanic

Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc., is located in the Bay View neighborhood, near the Port of Milwaukee on the southeast side of the city.³ The academy has been at that location since the fall of 2006, and recently purchased the building that houses the school.

A. Board of Directors

Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc., (Downtown Montessori) is governed by a volunteer board of directors. The Board has ultimate responsibility for the success of the school and is accountable directly to the City of Milwaukee and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to ensure that all terms of the school's charter are met. The board sets policy for the school and hires the head of school, who in turn hires school staff. The board has regular meetings to discuss issues, set policy, and conduct school business.⁴

This year, seven members comprised the board of directors: a president, a secretary, a treasurer, and four other directors. Five board members were in their first year, one member had served on the board for five years, and another for more than 10 years. Board members reflected a variety of experience and expertise including accounting, nonprofit work, law, marketing, and

³ The school was originally chartered by the City of Milwaukee in 1998. At that time, it was located in the downtown area. The school relocated in 2006.

⁴ *Parent/Student Handbook, 2011–12.*

education, as well as a parent representative. All members of the board participated in the board interviews conducted this year.⁵

All of the board members rated the school as “excellent” overall. The board members also reported that they participated in strategic planning, received a presentation on the school’s annual academic performance report, received and approved the school’s annual budget, and received a copy of the annual financial audit. The board said they valued the Montessori curriculum and philosophy, including the family atmosphere where administration, staff, and board are interactively involved and transparency is evident. The most cited suggestion for school improvement was development of a plan to increase the population of the school, particularly focused on retaining younger students to increase numbers at the upper grade levels. See Appendix H for additional results from board member interviews.

B. Philosophy and Description of Educational Methodology

1. Montessori Approach

Downtown Montessori delivers a valid Montessori program as interpreted by the Association Montessori Internationale or the American Montessori Society.⁶ 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. Begun in Italy by Dr. Maria Montessori, Montessori education was introduced into the United States in 1912, with one of the early schools established by Alexander Graham Bell in his own home. Montessori education has enjoyed a resurgence of interest in recent years, reflecting growing recognition of the validity of its approach.

⁵ Board interviews, along with teacher and student interviews and parent surveys, are conducted every other year.

⁶ See the 2011–12 *Parent/Student Handbook*, located on the school’s website.

Downtown Montessori is currently divided into four levels of programming. The Children's House contains the Montessori Primary Program, which is open to students ages 3 through 6 years, and includes grades K3, K4, and K5.⁷ The lower elementary program is designed for students in first through third grades; the upper elementary program is open to students in fourth through sixth grades; and the fourth level, the adolescent program, is for students in seventh and eighth grades.

The Children's House provides an environment that meets the needs of children—where children work individually and collaboratively with sensorial materials that engage their curiosity. Children are free to explore and observe at their own pace. The variety of sensorial experiences enables children to refine and classify their impressions of the world around them. The classroom engages children with numbers and language, writing and reading, the tools for reasoning and communication, and the basis of self-directed learning.

The sense of responsibility to self and to the community, introduced in the Children's House, is further developed in the elementary level. At the lower elementary level, the school continues to provide multi-age grouping in an environment that encourages cooperative learning and self-discipline. This program is based on "Great Stories" and explores everything from the microscopic to the cosmic, allowing children to discover how all things are inter-related.⁸ The program builds on the foundations of the Children's House program.

The upper elementary program follows a three-year curriculum cycle in all areas of study except mathematics. Learning ways of inquiring, investigating, and resolving questions plays a dominant role in the upper elementary program. The elementary levels emphasize an interdisciplinary approach to learning as well as respect for self and community. Materials and group activities are designed to develop individual and collaborative skills in the areas of biology, mathematics, language,

⁷ Children aged 5 on or before September 1 may attend full-day Montessori sessions. Children aged 4 on or before September 1 may attend a half- or full-day 4-year-old program. The full day for 4-year-olds consists of half-day Montessori and half-day child care.

⁸ In the Montessori curriculum, the Great Stories are the five stories that span the curriculum at a glance. Key lessons are taught as a result of the stories, emphasizing fundamental parts of each story that are found in all subject areas.

history, geography, music, and the visual arts. The environment reinforces children’s natural curiosity and community.

The adolescent program (seventh and eighth grades) reflects a more rigorous level of academic challenge and preparation for high school. Study skills, time management, and setting high work and social standards are all vital components of the adolescent program.

Students experience extensions of classroom study through community involvement, which gradually enables students to grow from classroom citizens to citizens in society at large. In addition to being a state-certified “Green and Healthy School,” the school is a member of the Urban Ecology Center. The center, located on the Milwaukee River, provides a coordinated science and environmental program for students.

The Montessori teacher/directress works with children individually and in groups, introducing materials and giving guidance as needed. The role of the teacher is to help the children teach themselves through the use of the Montessori materials and attention to the learning environment.⁹

During the interview and survey process, board members, teachers, and parents were asked about the school’s program of instruction. In all of the groups, nearly 100% of those asked rated the program of instruction as excellent or good or were very satisfied. All of the teachers interviewed indicated that the educational methodology was a “very important” reason for teaching at the school.

2. Teacher/Instructional Staff Information

The school consisted of eight classrooms during the 2011–12 academic year: three Children’s House classrooms for 3- to 6-year-olds (or K3 through K5), three lower elementary (first through third grades) classrooms, one upper elementary (fourth through sixth grades) classroom, and one adolescent (seventh and eighth grades) classroom.

⁹ *Parent/Student Handbook, 2011–12*, p. 23.

Throughout the school year, the school employed a total of nine instructional staff and five teaching assistants.¹⁰ Instructional staff consisted of eight teachers and the reading specialist. Three teachers taught at the Children’s House level; three taught lower elementary; and the upper elementary and adolescent classrooms each had one teacher. The reading specialist primarily supported the reading program in the lower elementary classrooms, and other levels as needed. In addition, a full-time assistant was assigned to each of the Children’s House teachers, the lower elementary teachers shared a teacher assistant, and one assistant provided support to the upper elementary teacher. The school contracted for speech-language pathologist services. One of the classroom teachers, who is certified as a special education teacher, shared her time between the Children’s House’s morning-only classroom and special education duties.

The school started the year with nine instructional staff.¹¹ (The speech pathologist was employed by an outside therapy provider and not by the school.) All instruction staff remained in the school’s employment during the school year, for an instructional staff retention rate of 100%. (The instructional staff retention rate is the percentage of teachers and other instructional staff who were employed at the school for the entire academic year.)

There were nine instructional staff at the end of the 2010–11 school year; all were eligible to return in the fall of 2011. Seven of the nine instructional staff returned in the fall of 2011 for a staff return rate of 77.8%.¹² (The staff return rate is the percentage of eligible staff employed at the end of the previous school year who return to the school in the fall. Eligible staff are those who are or would be offered continuing positions for the following school year.)

Three of the classroom teachers have taught at the school since its original charter 14 years ago. Another teacher has been teaching at the school for 12 years, one teacher completed her second,

¹⁰ Instructional staff include regular education teachers, specialists, and special education teachers.

¹¹ The person who shares teaching with special education duties is counted in the teacher cohort.

¹² The part-time reading teacher and the speech language pathologist did not return.

another her fourth, and another her fifth year at the school. One classroom teacher and the reading specialist each had one year of experience at the school. The average experience at Downtown Montessori for classroom teachers (including the special education teacher) and the reading teacher was 7.5 years.

All of the instructional staff had Montessori certification as well as a DPI license (licensure was verified on DPI's website.)

In-service meetings were primarily held one Friday each month from September through May and included the following topics:

1. In-school and offsite work on RtI by all staff. For example, the RtI Center at DPI provided a full-day workshop for three staff members: one Children's House teacher, one elementary teacher, and the head of school.
2. Integrating the Daily Five¹³ approach into the Montessori model. The Daily Five is a series of literacy tasks (reading to self, reading with someone, writing, word work, and listening to reading) that students complete daily while the teacher meets with small groups or confers with individuals.
3. Improving reading comprehension and transitioning to the new approach to literacy at Downtown Montessori – with literacy specialist. A full-day workshop on this topic was held for all teachers in August. The reading specialist conducted three follow-up sessions with the lower elementary teachers. The sessions occurred in the fall, winter, and spring and consisted of direct observation followed by discussions with each teacher.
4. Team building conducted by Management Resources Associates (MRA). This was an all-day workshop for all staff in March.
5. Planning solutions for improving student math skills. All teachers participated in this in May.
6. Continuing work on maintaining integrated, comprehensive services within the classroom for students with special education needs, specifically the roles of the special education teacher and classroom teachers in partnership.
7. The green school. Discussions were held and practices adopted to decrease the negative effects (e.g., carbon footprint) of school activities on the environment.

¹³ *The Daily Five: Fostering Literacy Independence in the Elementary Grades*, by G. Boushey and J. Moser, 2006, Portland, ME: Steinhouse Publishers.

During the interview process, teachers were asked about professional development opportunities: Seven of the nine teachers rated professional development opportunities as excellent or good and eight of the nine indicated they were satisfied with the opportunities for continuing education. (See Appendix E for teacher interview information.)

3. Parental Involvement

As described in the *Parent/Student Handbook, 2011–12*, Downtown Montessori seeks and depends upon the energy and spirit of its parents. Parents are urged to contact their child’s teacher for volunteer opportunities in and outside the classroom. Current research and prior experience at Downtown Montessori show a direct relationship between the degree of parental involvement in a school and the level of benefit children receive through that school.

Active involvement of parents includes activities such as accompanying children on field trips, reading stories and sharing their experiences, assisting in building improvements such as constructing shelves and assembling playground equipment, organizing publicity events, preparing snacks, and donating equipment. The school expects all parents to spend at least four hours per year on such service activities. The school posts activity sign-up sheets throughout the year, and sends emails as well as notes home with the students to encourage parents to participate in activities. Parents are also encouraged to visit their child’s class at least once a year.

Each child has a folder in which notices, school forms, and schoolwork are sent home with the child. Email is encouraged, as the school endeavors to communicate as much as possible through email to prevent unnecessary paper use in accordance with the principles of a Green and Healthy School. Teacher email addresses are listed in the *Parent/Student Handbook*. The school also has a website where current information and notices are available (<http://www.downtownmontessori.com>).

The school published and posted the annual *Parent/Student Handbook* on its website. Parent-teacher conferences occur twice each year as well as any time a parent wishes.

Teachers, parents, and board members were asked about parental involvement. A majority of board members and teachers indicated that they were somewhat or very satisfied with the level of parental involvement with the school. Nearly 90% of parents indicated that the opportunity for parent involvement with the school was excellent or good, and more than 80% indicated that the opportunity for parental participation was an important reason for choosing Downtown Montessori. (See Appendix F for additional parent survey responses.)

4. Discipline Policy

The school's code of conduct and discipline policy was published in the 2011–12 *Parent/Student Handbook*. It indicates that when dealing with discipline, it is most important to create a consistent environment for children. When the actions of a child demand correction, it is essential for all involved adults to deal with the problem in the same way.

The Montessori method encourages children to make choices and develop responsibility for their own actions. Discipline is used to help, not punish, the child. The method of corrective discipline endorsed by Downtown Montessori has grown out of the Montessori approach. When a child is involved in actions contrary to established rules, the goal is to redirect the child to other activities.

All staff and parents serve as role models for the children, as demonstrated by their conduct with the children, other staff, and other parents. Each child should be dealt with positively; parents and staff should avoid showing anger. Quiet time is used only if redirection of the child does not work. The child will choose when he/she is ready to rejoin the group.

When, in the judgment of the teacher and program director, a child's behavior is disruptive, disrespectful, cruel, or unsafe to the child or others, it cannot and will not be tolerated. All interventions will be formulated based on the principles of respect for the child; knowledge and

understanding of the developmental needs and characteristics of the child and the needs of the group; and an understanding that appropriate behavior must be taught and modeled.

The discipline policy goes on to describe specific consequences for older children when other interventions have not worked. These steps 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, depending on the nature of the offense. For chronic behavior problems that are suspected to be beyond the child's control, a referral is made to support services for evaluation and help. Suspension and/or expulsion of students are considered last resorts and are subject to board review.

This year teachers, parents, and board members were asked about the discipline policy at Downtown Montessori. The opinions expressed were very favorable regarding discipline policy:

- Teachers:
 - » Seven (77.8%) of nine teachers considered the discipline at the school as a "very important" or "somewhat important" reason for continuing to teach there; and
 - » Eight (88.9%) were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with both the discipline policy as stated and the adherence to the discipline.
- Parents:
 - » Nearly 70% of 86 parents considered discipline as a "very important" or "somewhat important" factor in choosing Downtown Montessori;
 - » Eighty (93.0%) rated the discipline methods at the school as "good" or excellent"; and
 - » Seventy-three (84.9%) were comfortable with how the staff handles discipline.
- Board Members:
 - » All seven board members were very satisfied with the discipline policy; and
 - » All of the board members who knew about the adherence to the discipline policy were satisfied with it.

5. Waiting List

As of September 27, 2011, 46 students were on the waiting list. Of these, 18 were waiting for K3; 15 for K4; and 13 students were on the waiting list for K5 through eighth grade. As of May 30, 2012, approximately 42 students were on the waiting list, with the majority at the lower grade levels and a few at the fifth- and sixth-grade level (per interview with head of school.)

B. Student Population

Downtown Montessori started the school year with 166 children in K3 through eighth grade.¹⁴ By the end of the year, five more children had enrolled and five had withdrawn. Withdrawal reasons included two students whose parents did not understand the Montessori approach; one student's parents were not ready for their child to be in school; one student's parent was unhappy with the school; and one student moved away.¹⁵ Two first graders, two K4, and one K3 student withdrew. None of the children who withdrew had special education needs. There were 161 of 166 children who started and finished the school year at Downtown Montessori; this represents a student retention rate of 97.0%.

At the end of the year, 166 students were enrolled.

- Ninety-four (56.6%) students were White, 28 (16.9%) were African American, 32 (19.3%) were Latina/o, nine (5.4%) were Asian, two (1.2%) were Native American/Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and one (0.6%) student was of Middle Eastern descent.
- There were 85 (51.2%) girls and 81 (48.8%) boys.
- Seventeen (10.2%) students had special education needs. Seven had speech/language impairments, seven had specific learning disabilities, two had other health impairments, and one student was autistic.

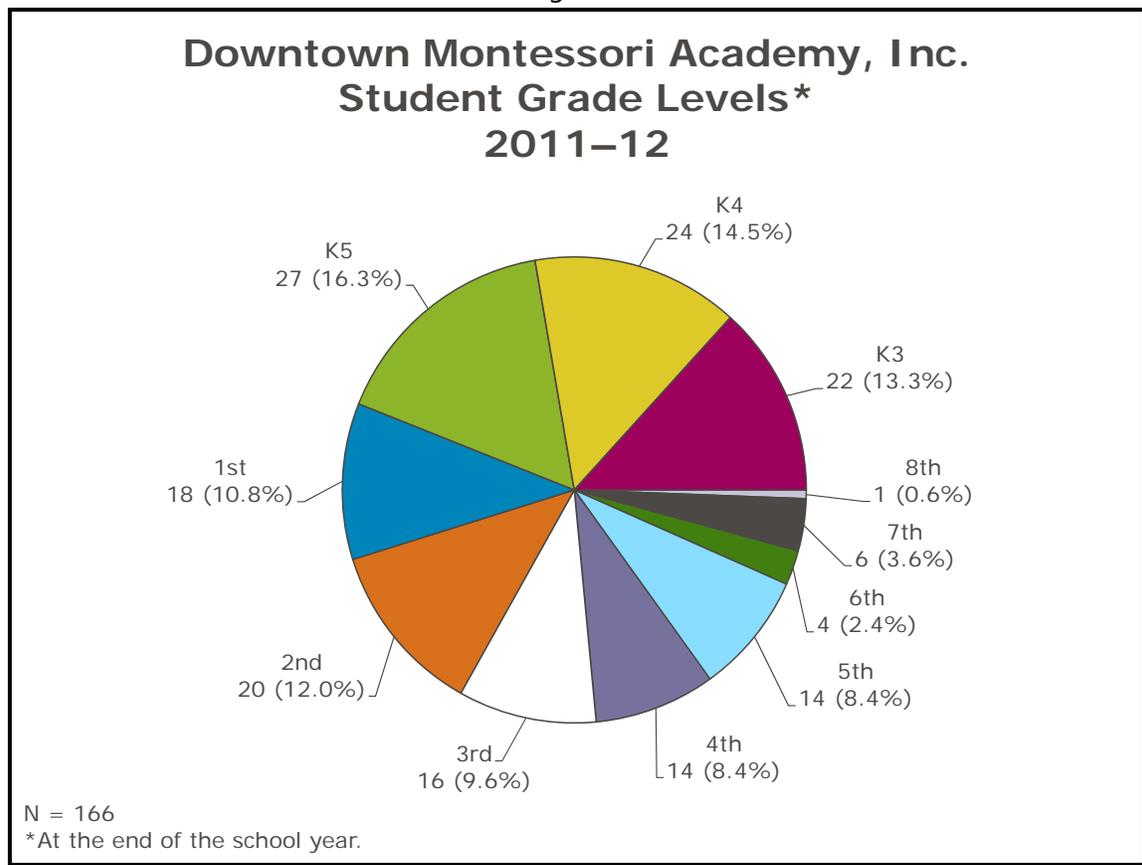
¹⁴ As of September 16, 2011.

¹⁵ The school does not expel any students.

- Forty-eight (28.9%) students were eligible for free or reduced lunch prices.

Grade levels for students enrolled at the end of the school year are illustrated below. The largest class was K5, with 27 students, and the smallest was eighth grade, with one student.

Figure 1



There were 136 students attending Downtown Montessori on the last day of the 2010–11 academic year who were eligible for continued enrollment at the school this past academic year (i.e., they did not graduate). Of these, 112 were enrolled in the school on the third Friday in September 2011. This represents a return rate of 82.4% and compares to a return rate of 85.4% in the fall of 2010.

Sixth, seventh, and eighth graders participated in satisfaction interviews at the end of the school year. All 11 students interviewed reported that they feel safe in school, learn new things in school, and that they have improved in reading and math. Ten of the 11 reported that their teachers talk to their parents. When asked what they liked best about the school, students mentioned teaching style, class size, freedom, and familiarity of the school. Dress code and lack of spontaneity in the classroom, including too quiet classrooms, were mentioned as aspects least liked.

D. Hours of Instruction

The 2011–12 school year consisted of 163 school days. The hours of instruction for K3 and K4 students were 8:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. each day. For students in K5 through eighth grades, the school day was 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The highest possible number of hours of instruction per day was three hours for K3 and K4 students and 6.5 hours for K5 through eighth-grade students; therefore, the provision of at least 875 hours of instruction for full-day students (K5 through eighth grade) was met. K3 and K4 students attended half days; therefore, the provision of 437.5 (one-half of 875) hours of instruction was met.

E. Computer/Technology Capability

Downtown Montessori has generic personal computers (IBM-compatible). All students have access to computer stations at various times throughout the day. The school publishes its Internet usage policy in the *Parent/Student Handbook* and requires parent and student signatures on an elementary/adolescent student computer use contract. The school uses Montessori Records Express to collect student data and data related to academic progress. Montessori Records Express is a web-based record-keeping system that tracks attendance, progress, and lesson plans. The program also generates custom progress reports.

F. Activities for Continuous School Improvement

The following is a description of Downtown Montessori's response to the activities recommended in the programmatic profile and educational performance report for the 2010–11 academic year.

- Recommendation: Develop a school-wide policy for retaining a student in the same grade for another year.

Response: The school developed the following policy that will be included in the *Parent/Student Handbook, 2012–13*:

As a multi-graded program, the school prefers not to retain students, but rather to meet the individual needs of the child within their peer environment. When it is necessary to consider the retention of a student for an additional year at a certain grade level, the school evaluates each child socially, academically, and emotionally. The team considers the impact of retention in all of these areas. The decision is made in collaboration with the parents, teachers, and administration. Students are included when appropriate.

- Recommendation: Continue to develop the skills of new and returning members of the board of directors.

Response: Phase 2 of a grant received from the nonprofit Management Fund was used to develop a fund-development business plan, and to identify and train board members regarding specific development responsibilities, including recruiting new board members. The school added three new board members, one of whom is a parent. The board also established a development committee and continues to refine orientation materials.

This year, the treasurer and the secretary of the board attended "Board Star" courses relevant to their positions. In addition, the school's accountant met twice this year with board members to explain the school's financial statements. Board members continue to research various employee benefit options that will help retain current staff and attract new staff.

The school also established a new position of executive director; this position was filled in the fall of 2012. The school's executive director meets with each new or prospective board member and provides an orientation that includes the expectations of board members.

The school conducted a board/staff team building event this year. They cooked dinner together at the El Mito teaching kitchen, which provided an opportunity to mix board and staff members.

- Recommendation: Develop a methodology to align the RtI (Response to Intervention) model required by the State of Wisconsin with the Montessori approach, similar to the way special education is aligned with the Montessori approach.

Response: The school began to develop grade level indicators from the continuum of Montessori skills in the lower grades. These indicators aligned with the state standards. Indicators were then used to identify students who needed intervention. School staff will repeat a similar process for the upper grades in the upcoming year.

After reviewing the information in this report and in consultation with the program director in May 2012, CRC recommends that the focus of activities for the 2012–13 school year include the following.

- Focus on improving math outcomes by identifying the best instructional practices and building teacher capacity.
- Continue to improve classroom physical environment.
- Continue to implement methods to identify “grade level indicators” that are aligned with the state standards in all areas of instruction. These indicators will be used for the RtI (Response to Intervention) model required by the State of Wisconsin with the Montessori approach, similar to the way special education is aligned with the Montessori approach.
- Develop a plan for increasing the number of students at the school, particularly at the higher grades.

G. Graduation and High School Guidance Information

The school informally discussed high school programs and schools with seventh- and eighth-grade students and their parents. Parents were encouraged to visit various high schools with their students.

There was one eighth-grade student this year; he/she graduated and will attend Rufus King High School in the fall.

At this time, Downtown Montessori does not have a formal method to track the high school achievement of its graduates. The school's administrator reported that feedback from high schools is very positive. The school's first graduate (in June 2009) graduated from high school this year and will attend college in the fall.

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 conferences, and parent contracts as well as goals related to special education students. The school used internal and external measures of academic progress. This section of the report describes school success in meeting attendance, conference, parent contract, and special education goals. It also describes student progress as measured internally on student report cards and externally by standardized tests, such as the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT) and the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE).

A. Attendance

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal of maintaining an average attendance rate of 85%. This year, the school surpassed this goal, as students, on average, attended school 95.4% of the time.¹⁶ When excused absences were included, the attendance rate rose to 99.9%.¹⁷

¹⁶ Attendance rate is based on all 171 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.

¹⁷ CSRC requires that the school report suspensions. The school did not suspend any students this year.

B. Parent Conferences and Contracts

At the beginning of the academic year, the school established a goal that parents of all students would participate in scheduled parent-teacher conferences. This year, the school scheduled two conference sessions, one in the fall and one in the spring. Parents of all (100.0%) children enrolled at the time of the conferences attended. The school has therefore met its goal related to parent conferences.

The school also established a goal that 95% of parents would fulfill the requirements of the parent contract related to hours of involvement. The school requested that families contribute four hours per person or family this year. This year, parents of all (100.0%) children fulfilled contract requirements; therefore, the school has met this goal.

C. Special Education Student Records

This year, the school established a goal to develop and maintain records for all special education students. During the year, there were 17 students with special education needs. All special education students had an IEP. During the year, the school conducted IEP reviews for all students who required one. Special education eligibility assessment for three students was due this year (eligibility reviews occur every three years). Two students were no longer eligible and one student continued with special education services.

In addition, CRC conducted a review of a representative number of files during the year. This review indicated that IEPs had been completed and reviewed in a timely manner, and that parents were invited to and participated in the IEP team. The school has met its goal related to keeping updated special education records.

D. Local Measures of Educational Performance

Charter schools, by their definition and nature, are autonomous schools with curricula that reflect each school's individual philosophy, mission, and goals. In addition to administering standardized tests, each charter school is responsible for describing goals and expectations for its students in the context of that school's unique approach to education. These goals and expectations are established by each city-chartered school at the beginning of the academic year to measure the educational performance of its students. These local measures are useful for monitoring and reporting progress, guiding and improving instruction, clearly expressing the expected quality of student work, and providing evidence that students are meeting local benchmarks. The CSRC expectation is that at a minimum, schools establish local measures in reading, writing, math, and special education. Due to their young age, results for 3- to 5-year-olds are combined below. Results in each academic content area for students in first through eighth grades are illustrated subsequently.

1. Progress Reports for Grades K3 Through K5

Downtown Montessori uses the Scholastic Progress Reports in grades K3 through K5 to track students' progress on a variety of skills. The K3 through K5 report cards track student skills in the following areas:

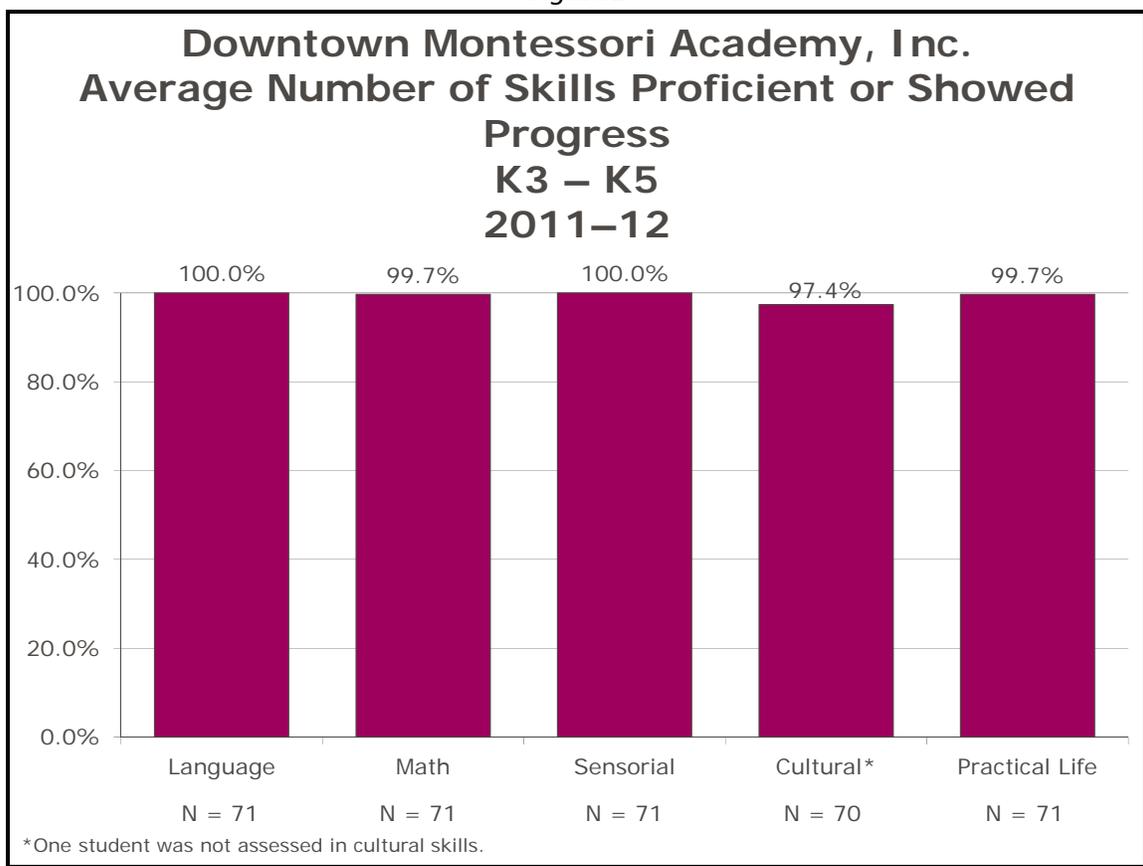
- Language, e.g., spoken, written, reading, parts of speech, and word study;
- Mathematical development, e.g., numbers, counting, addition, subtraction, and multiplication;
- Sensorial discrimination, e.g., visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory;
- Cultural areas, e.g., globes, maps, and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

Students are rated as "presented," "practiced," "improving," or "proficient" on each skill. This year, the school established a goal that by the end of the year, K3 through K5 students who attended

all year would show progress or be proficient in practical life, sensorial, mathematical development, language, and cultural skills.

This year, data were submitted for 71 K3 through K5 students who were enrolled for the year. On average, students showed progress or reached proficient on 100.0% of language skills, 99.7% of math skills, 100.0% of sensorial skills, 97.4% of cultural skills, and 99.7% of practical life skills (Figure 2).¹⁸ Results also indicate that all (100.0%) students showed progress or reached proficient in all language and sensorial skills; 70 (98.6%) of 71 students showed progress or reached proficient in all math and/or practical life skills; and 65 (92.9%) of 70 students showed progress or reached proficient in all cultural skills (not shown.)

Figure 2



¹⁸ Rates were calculated for each student and averaged across all students.

2. Reading, Writing, and Math Progress for First Through Eighth Grades

a. *Reading Skills*

Reading skills for students in first through third grade were measured using the DIBELS.¹⁹ DIBELS helps teachers assess student skills in a variety of areas. First graders are assessed in letter naming, nonsense word, and oral reading fluency; second graders are tested in nonsense word and oral reading fluency; and third graders are tested in oral reading fluency. Oral reading fluency for students in all grades is based on scores related to the number of correct words, accuracy, and retell capabilities. Test results indicate if a student met, was below, or was well below grade level benchmarks. Students are tested in the fall and again in the spring in various areas. Reading material was presented to students in the context of the Daily Five, a series of literacy tasks that students complete daily while the teacher meets with small groups or confers with students one-on-one.

The school had originally planned to assess student skills based on McGraw-Hill placement tests. The goal was that students who scored at basic or minimal thresholds in the fall would improve scores by 10% or attain proficiency; and that students who were proficient would continue to demonstrate proficiency based on the spring examination. To provide a measure of student progress, similar goals were applied to the DIBELS oral reading fluency accuracy results. Because first graders are tested for accuracy only in the spring, results indicate the percentage of children who scored at or above benchmarks on the spring test administration. Second and third grade results show progress from fall to spring.

¹⁹ The school planned to administer the McGraw-Hill placement test at the beginning and end of the year to measure reading progress. However, the staff decided that the DIBELS would be more helpful in informing teaching strategies as well as measuring progress over time.

Based on DIBELS oral reading fluency accuracy results, 55.6% of first graders scored at or above the grade level benchmark. See Table 1.

Table 1			
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.			
Reading			
1st Grade			
2011–12			
Grade	N	End of Year	
		At or Above Benchmark	% At or Above Benchmark
1st	18	10	55.6%

There were 17 second- or third-grade students who scored below grade level benchmarks in the fall. Of these, 82.4% increased their score²⁰ or reached the grade level benchmark by the end of the year. In addition, 18 students scored at or above benchmark in the fall; 15 (83.3%) of these students remained at or above the benchmark score at the end of the year. See Table 2.

Table 2				
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.				
Reading				
2nd and 3rd Grade				
2011–12				
Start of Year	N	End of year		
		At or Above Benchmark	Progress	Percent Met
Below benchmark	17	4	10	82.4%
At or above benchmark	18	15	0	83.3%
Overall	35	19	10	82.9%

Literacy skill development for fourth through sixth graders was assessed in vocabulary using the Roots of Language Series; in oral reading fluency based on the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Fluency

²⁰ Because scores tended to be clustered at 90% or above, there was little opportunity for students to increase scores by 10%; therefore, the measure counts students who showed any improvement.

Test; and in grammar on scholastics in “Grammar Works,” and on “Grammar” by Instructional Fair, Inc. The goal for vocabulary skill development was that students would score higher on the end-of-the-year test than on the test administered at the beginning of the year. In addition, students who scored basic or minimal in the fall would reach proficiency or improve scores by 10 percentage points; students who scored proficient would maintain proficiency. The school met vocabulary goals for 89.7% of students.

The oral reading fluency goal was that students would show improvement from the beginning-of-the-year test score compared to the end of the year test score. Students who scored minimal or basic skills will improve by 10 percentage points and students who scored in the proficient range will maintain proficiency. The school met oral reading fluency goals for 100% of students.

Table 3				
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.				
Literacy				
Grades 4th – 6th				
2011–12				
Vocabulary				
Start of Year	N	End of Year		
		Proficient	Progress	Percent Met
Minimal/Basic	25	15	8	92.0%
Proficient	4	3	0	75.0%
Overall	29	18	8	89.7%
Oral Reading Fluency				
Minimal/Basic	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Proficient	31	31	0	100.0%
Overall	31	31	0	100.0%

The goal for grammar was that students score 71% or higher on a teacher-developed test administered at the end of the school year. As illustrated, 61.3% of students met the goal.

Table 4			
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.			
Grammar			
Grades 4th – 6th			
2011–12			
Grades	N Tested	Number Met Goal	% Met Goal
4th – 6th	31	19	61.3%

The reading goal for seventh- and eighth-grade students was that students would show progress as measured by the average literacy grade percentage from the first marking period to the last marking period. Averages include grades for projects, group risk, study guide questions, themes, and vocabulary. This year, scores were submitted for seven seventh- and eighth-grade students. Due to the size of this cohort, results cannot be reported. However, the results are included in the overall percentage of students reaching the reading/literacy local measures.

Overall, the school met its reading/literacy goals for 83.0% of first- through eighth-grade students (Table 5).

Table 5				
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.				
Reading/Literacy Goals				
Grades 1st – 8th				
2011–12				
Grade Level	Measure	Number of Students	Number of Students Who Met Goal	Percent of Students Who Met Goal
1st	DIBELS	18	10	55.6%
2nd and 3rd	DIBELS	35	29	82.9%
4th – 6th *	Roots of Language; Macmillan/McGraw Fluency Test; Teacher-developed test	28	27	96.4%
7th and 8th	Teacher-developed test	Could not report due to N size	Could not report due to N size	Could not report due to N size
Total	--	88	73	83.0%

*Met goals in two of the three areas tested.

b. *Writing Skills*

This year, the school set a goal that all students would maintain or improve writing skills as measured by the Six Traits of Writing scores. First through third grades focused on organization and conventions, fourth through sixth grades focused on all six traits, and seventh and eighth grades focused on organization, fluency, and conventions. The fall test was given prior to October 15, 2011, and the spring test was given after May 1, 2012. Student skills were assessed on a five-point rubric for each of the six traits.

This year, 87 first- through eighth-grade students were tested at both times. Results indicate that 71 (81.6%) students were able to maintain or improve scores from one test to the other (Table 6).

Table 6			
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.			
Writing Skills Progress Based on Six Traits of Writing			
Grades 1st – 8th			
2011–12			
Grade	N	Number Maintained/ Improved	% Maintained/ Improved
1st	16	13	81.3%
2nd	19	17	89.5%
3rd	16	10	62.5%
4th	14	13	92.9%
5th	11	9	81.8%
6th – 8th	11	9	81.8%
Total	87	71	81.6%

c. *Math Skills*

First- through sixth-grade students were rated on a number of math skills. Each math skill was rated as “presented,” “practiced,” “improving” or “proficient.” The school’s goal was that students enrolled for the year would reach proficiency or show improvement on all grade level math skills. Scores were provided for 82 of 83 first through sixth graders.

Students were assessed on five math skills.²¹ By the end of the year, 60 (73.2%) of them had reached proficient or shown progress in all skills. On average, students had mastered 90.0% of math skills (Table 7).

Table 7				
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.				
Math Progress and Proficiency				
Grades 1st – 6th				
2011–12				
Grade	Number of Students	Students Who Reached Proficient/ Progressed in All Skills		Average Percentage Skills Proficient at End of Year
		N	%	
1st	16	10	62.5%	82.5%
2nd	19	18	94.7%	97.9%
3rd	16	10	62.5%	82.5%
4th	14	11	78.6%	95.7%
5th	13	7	53.9%	87.7%
6th	4	Could not report due to <i>n</i> size		
Total	82	60	73.2%	90.0%

Math progress for seventh and eighth graders was based on the Mathematical Connection curriculum (which replaced the Connected Mathematics curriculum). The goal was that students who scored 85% or higher on the first chapter test would score 85% or higher on the last one, and students who scored below 85% would increase their score by 10 percentage points. Due to the small size of

²¹ Note that one student was not assessed on any math skills.

this group, grade-level results could not be included in this report, but are included in the overall local measure goal.

Overall, the school met its math local measure goals for 66 of 89 (74.2%) first- through eighth-grade students.

3. Special Education Student Progress

The school also set a goal for special education students. The goal was that students who had an active IEP would demonstrate progress toward meeting their IEP goals at the time of the 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.) This year, 14 students were assessed on one to six goals (IEP progress was not due for three students as they had recently started special education services.) Seven students met all goals, three met 50% or more goals, two met 20% or more, and two students did not meet any IEP goals. Overall, 12 of 14 (85.7%) special education students demonstrated progress on their IEP goals.

E. Standardized Measures of Educational Performance

The SDRT is the standardized test required by the CSRC for administration to first, second, and third graders enrolled in city-chartered schools to assess student reading skills. Students are tested in phonetic analysis, vocabulary, and comprehension. Results are provided as grade-level equivalents (GLE). CSRC requires the test to be administered between March 15 and April 15. The school administered the SDRT in May 2012.

The CSRC also requires that students in third through eighth grade take the WKCE. This test is required by the State of Wisconsin and is administered to all students in Wisconsin public schools in October or November of each year. The WKCE meets federal No Child Left Behind requirements that

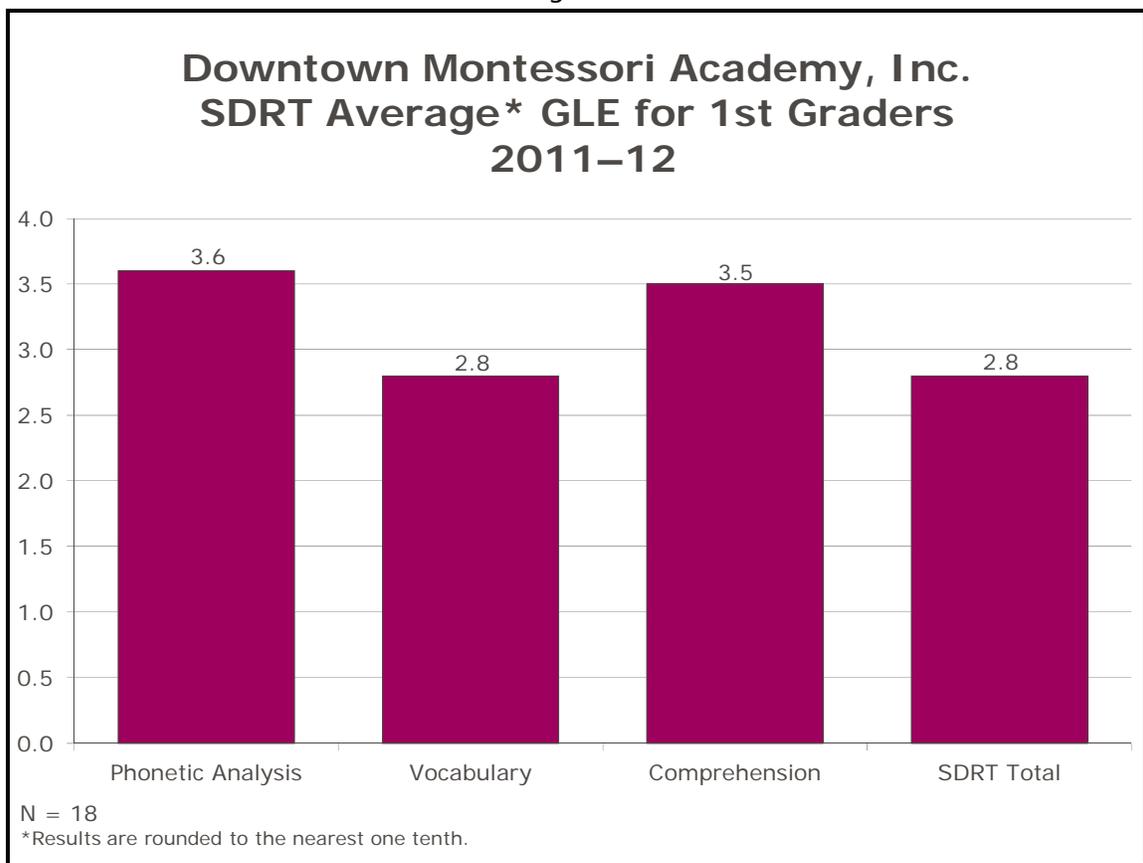
students in third through eighth grades be tested in reading and mathematics. Students in fourth and eighth grades are also tested in language arts, science, and social studies. Based on results, students are placed in one of four proficiency categories—advanced, proficient, basic, or minimal—in each content area. The school administered the test in October 2011.

The following section describes results of the standardized measures of academic performance. It reflects results for all students enrolled in the school at the time of the test administration, including students enrolled for a full academic year (FAY) and those students who were new to the school.

1. SDRT for First Grade

This year, the SDRT was administered to 18 first graders. Results indicate that, on average, first graders were functioning at second- to third-grade reading GLEs in the three areas (Figure 3).

Figure 3



The GLE range, median score, and the percentage of first graders at or above GLE are illustrated in Table 8. Nearly all students scored at or above GLE in every reading area tested.

Table 8				
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.				
SDRT GLE for 1st Graders				
2011–12				
(N = 18)				
Area Tested	Lowest Grade Level Scored	Highest Grade Level Scored	Median	% at or Above GLE
Phonetic Analysis	K.5	5.8	3.5	94.4%
Vocabulary	1.4	5.3	2.7	100.0%
Comprehension	1.4	7.7	3.2	100.0%
SDRT Total	1.1	6.1	2.9	100.0%

Note: Results are rounded to the nearest one tenth.

2. SDRT for Second Grade

SDRT results for second graders indicate that students were reading at third- to sixth-grade levels, on average, in the areas tested. Nearly all students (95%) scored at or above GLE in every area tested (Figure 4; Table 9).

Figure 4

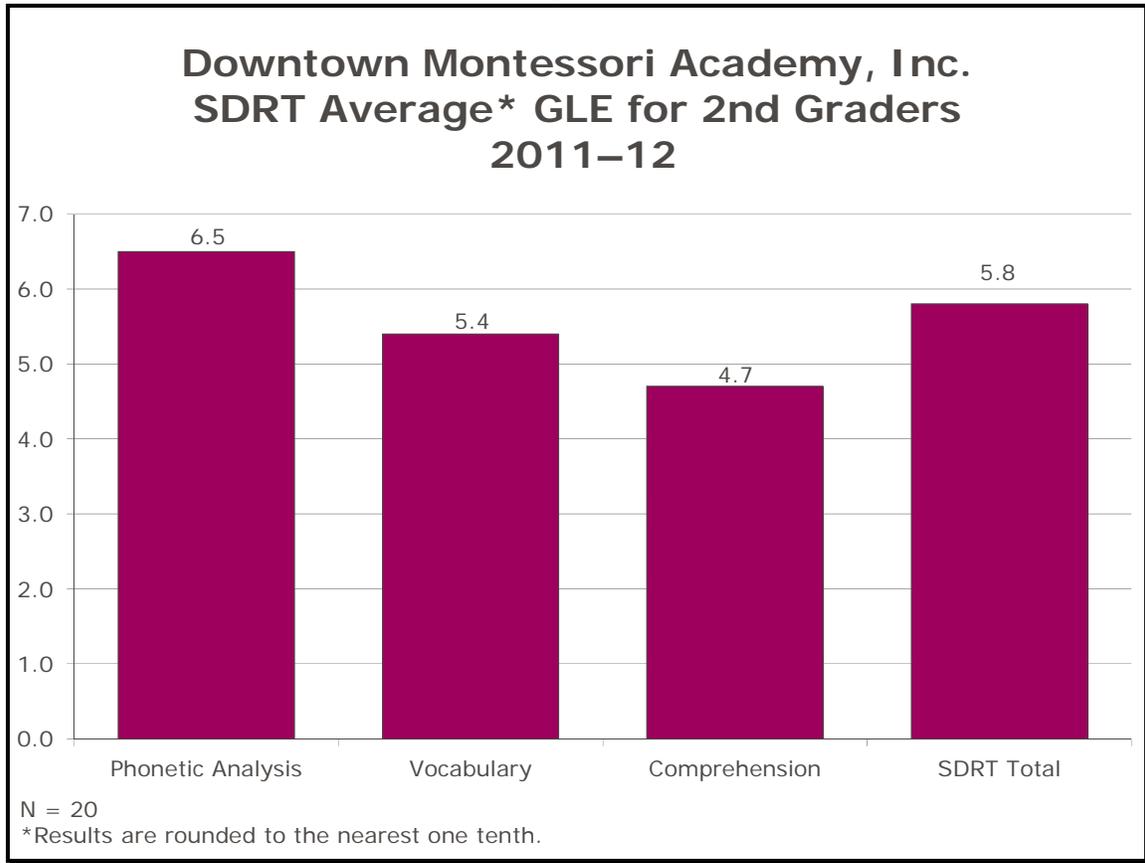


Table 9

**Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.
SDRT GLE for 2nd Graders
2011–12
(N = 20)**

Area Tested	Lowest Grade Level Scored	Highest Grade Level Scored	Median	% at or Above GLE
Phonetic Analysis	1.5	10.9	6.3	90.0%
Vocabulary	1.6	8.1	5.6	95.0%
Comprehension	1.9	8.9	4.4	95.0%
SDRT Total	1.8	PHS	5.4	95.0%

Note: Results are rounded to the nearest one tenth. Post-high-school scores were set to 12.9.

3. SDRT for Third Grade

Results for third graders indicate that students, on average, scored in the fourth- to sixth-grade reading level in the areas tested and most (62.5 to 93.8%) scored at or above GLE (Figure 5; Table 10).

Figure 5

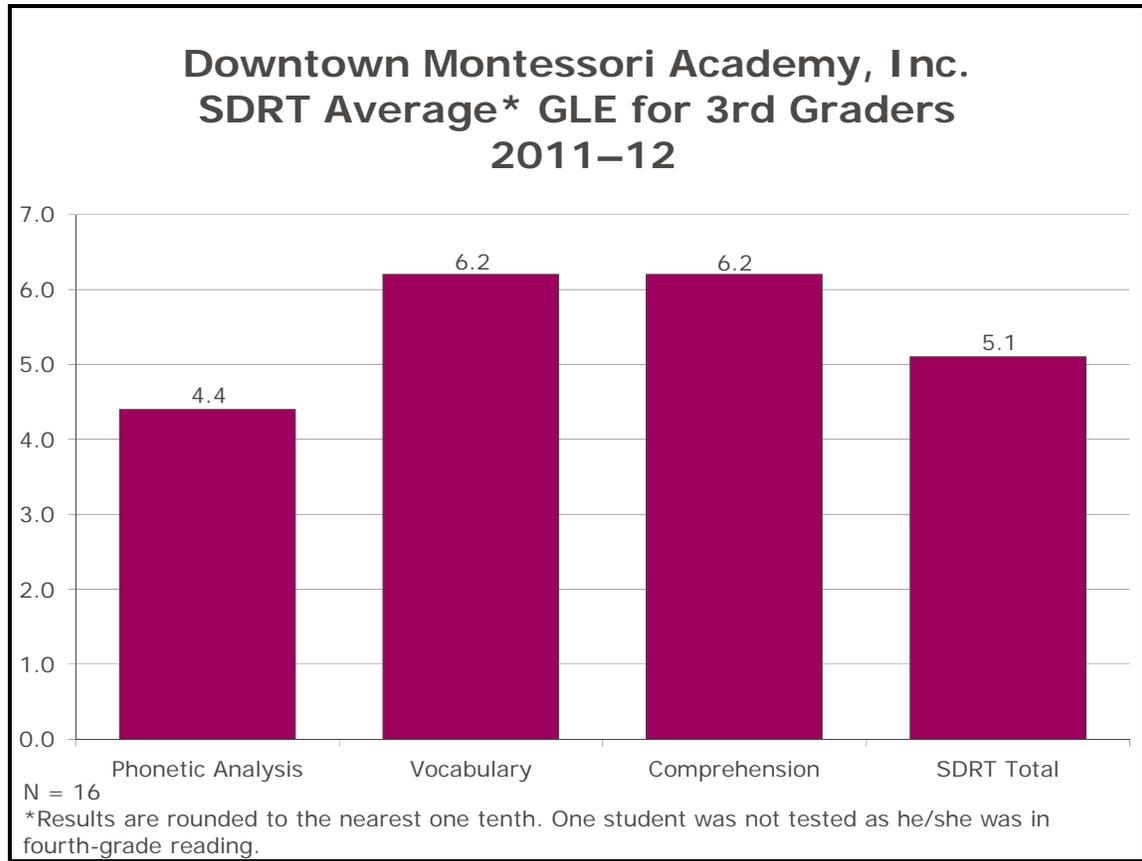


Table 10

**Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.
SDRT GLE for 3rd Graders
2011-12
(N = 16)**

Area Tested	Lowest Grade Level Scored	Highest Grade Level Scored	Median	% at or Above GLE
Phonetic Analysis	2.2	10.8	3.4	62.5%
Vocabulary	3.1	12.9	5.4	100.0%
Comprehension	2.8	10.1	7.1	93.8%
SDRT Total	2.9	8.2	5.4	93.8%

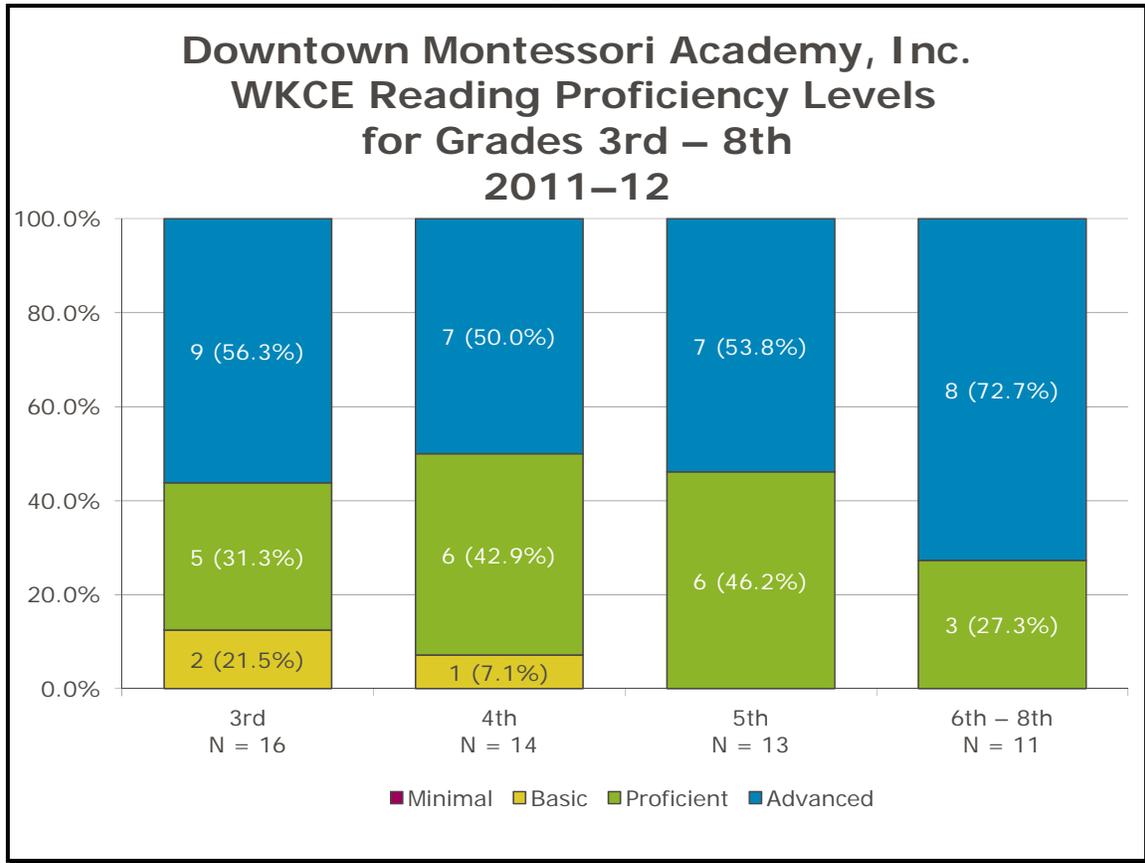
Note: Results are rounded to the nearest one tenth.

4. WKCE

a. *Reading*

Results for third grade indicate that nine (56.3%) students were reading at an advanced level, five (31.3%) scored at the proficient level, and two (12.5%) students scored in the basic category. No third graders scored in the minimal category. Results for fourth grade indicate that seven (50.0%) students scored advanced, six (42.9%) were proficient, and one (7.1%) scored basic in reading. All fifth-grade students were proficient (46.2%) or advanced in reading (53.8%). There were four sixth-, six seventh-, and one eighth-grade student who were administered the WKCE. Due to the small size of these cohorts, results by grade were combined to protect student identity. Results for the sixth through eighth grades indicate that eight (72.7%) students scored advanced and three (27.3%) were proficient. No sixth, seventh, or eighth graders performed in the minimal or basic ranges in reading. Overall, 51 of the 54 students (94.4%) who took the WKCE in the fall were either proficient or advanced in reading.

Figure 6



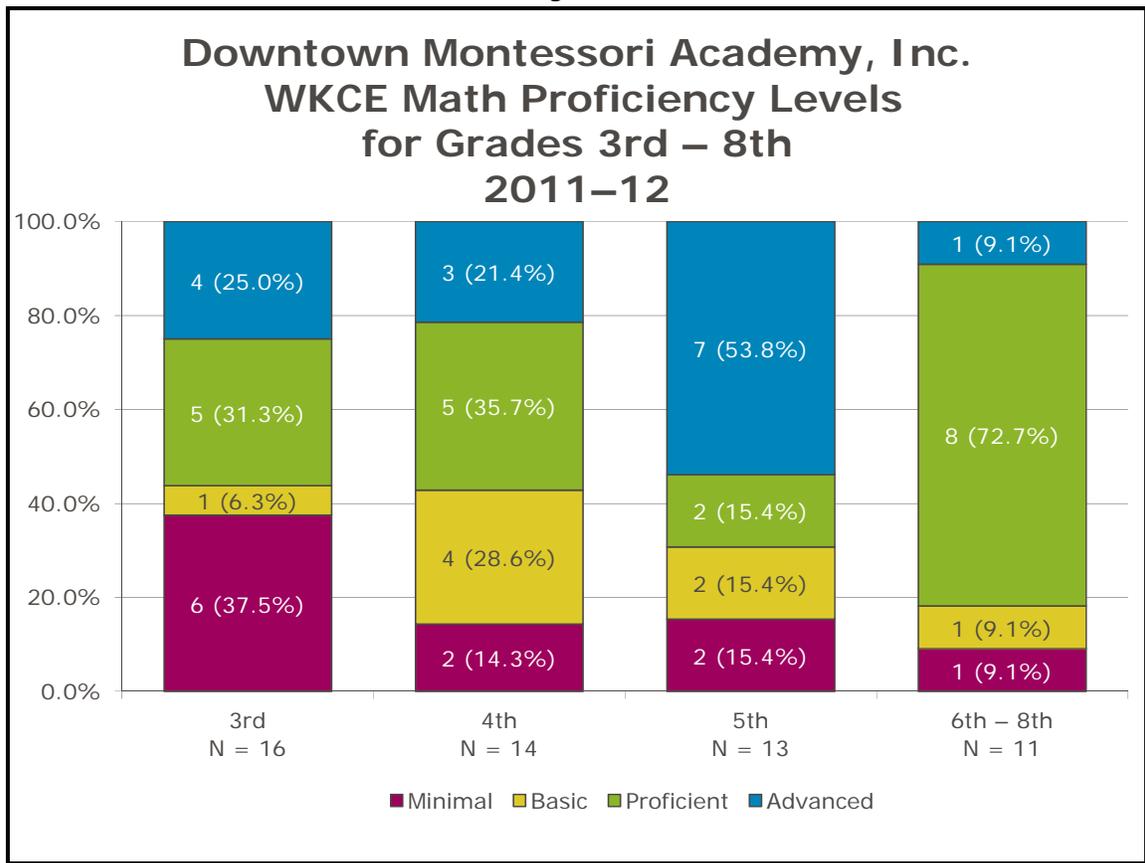
On average, third-grade students scored in the 60th percentile statewide in reading; fourth-grade students scored in the 54th percentile; fifth graders scored in the 62nd percentile, and sixth-through eighth-grade students, on average, scored in the 70th percentile in reading (not shown).

b. Math

In math, four (25.0%) third-grade students exhibited advanced skills, five (31.3%) scored proficient, one (6.3%) scored in the basic range, and six (37.5%) students scored minimal math proficiency. Fourth-grade results indicate that three (21.4%) students scored in the advanced category; five (35.7%) proficient; four (28.6%) basic; and two (14.3%) students scored in the minimal category. Fifth-grade results indicate that seven (53.8%) students scored advanced; two (15.4%)

proficient; two (15.4%) basic; and two (15.4%) scored in the minimal category. In math for sixth through eighth graders, one (9.1%) student exhibited advanced skills, eight (72.7%) scored proficient, one (9.1%) student scored in the basic level, and one (9.1%) student exhibited minimal math skills (Figure 7). Overall, 35 of the 54 students (64.8%) who took the WKCE in the fall scored proficient or advanced in math.

Figure 7

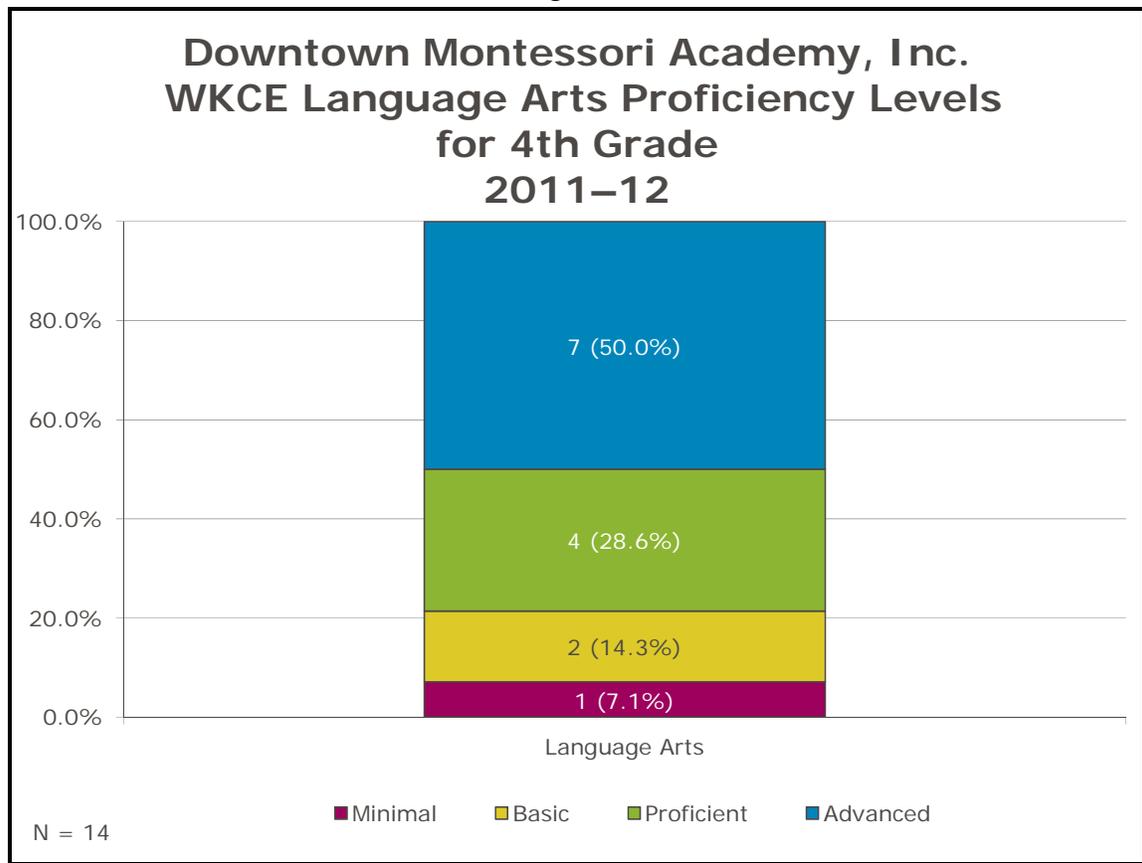


Third graders, on average, scored in the 35th percentile in math; fourth graders scored in the 34th percentile, on average; fifth graders, on average, scored in the 47th percentile; and sixth-through eighth-grade students scored, on average, in the 39th percentile in math (not shown.)

c. *Language Arts*

In addition to reading and math, fourth and eighth graders are tested in language arts, science, and social studies. CSRC requires the results for language arts to be included in this report. As illustrated below, half of fourth graders exhibited advanced, four (28.6%) proficient, two (14.3%) basic, and one (7.1%) student scored in the minimal proficiency category. Due to the small size of the eighth-grade cohort, proficiency levels for language arts could not be included in this report.

Figure 8



d. *Writing*

The final score from the WKCE is a writing score; fourth- and eighth-grade students are administered the writing portion of the WKCE. The extended writing sample is scored with two holistic

rubrics. A six-point composing rubric evaluates students' ability to control purpose/focus, organization/coherence, development of content, sentence fluency, and word choice. A three-point conventions rubric evaluates students' ability to use punctuation, grammar, capitalization, and spelling. Points received on these two rubrics are combined to produce a single score, with a maximum possible score of nine.

This year, the extended writing scores for fourth graders ranged from 4.0 to 7.0 and the median score was 5.0, meaning half of the students scored at or below 5.0, and half scored 5.0 to 7.0 on a scale of 0 to 9. Due to the small size of the eighth-grade cohort, proficiency levels for the student writing scores could not be included in this report.

F. Multiple-Year Student Progress

Year-to-year student progress is measured by comparing scores on standardized tests from one year to the next. The tests used to examine progress are the SDRT (reading only) and the WKCE (reading and math). The CSRC requires that progress for students who met proficiency expectations be reported separately from those who did not.

The following section includes all students for whom standardized test data were available in consecutive years. This includes students enrolled for a FAY and students who were new to the school.

Note that starting in the 2012–13 school year, Wisconsin is raising the benchmark scores needed for students to reach the proficient or advanced performance levels on the WKCE. These new college and career readiness proficiency levels are based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) standards.²²

²² <http://dpi.state.wi.us/oea/pdf/highexp.pdf>

1. First- Through Third-Grade Students

First- through third-grade reading progress was measured using the SDRT. Results from this test are stated in GLE. The CSRC expects at least 75% of the students who were at or above grade level the previous spring will maintain at or above grade-level status from spring to spring testing. The expectation for students with below-grade-level scores in the previous year is more-than-one-year GLE advancement.

Table 11 describes reading progress results, as measured by the SDRT, over consecutive academic years for students tested as first graders in 2010–11 and as second graders in 2011–12, and for second graders who returned as third graders in 2011–12. Overall, SDRT totals indicate that 75.0% of students improved at least 1.0 GLE, and students improved, on average, 1.8 GLE from one grade to the next. The median improvement was 1.8 GLE.

Table 11					
Downtown Montessori					
Average GLE Advancement in Reading					
Based on SDRT					
Grades	GLE				
	Average GLE (2010–11)	Average GLE (2011–12)	Median Advancement	Average Advancement	% Advanced 1.0 GLE or More
1st to 2nd (n = 15)	2.6	4.9	1.7	2.2	80.0%
2nd to 3rd (n = 13)	3.7	5.1	2.0	1.4	69.2%
Total (N = 28)	--	--	1.8	1.8	75.0%

a. *Students at or Above GLE*

There were 26 students at or above GLE in 2010; all (100%) scored at or above GLE in 2011–12.

See Table 12.

Table 12			
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.			
Progress for Students at or Above GLE in 2010–11			
Based on SDRT			
Grades	Students Who Were at or Above GLE in 2010–11	Students Who Maintained at or Above in 2011–12	
		N	%
1st Through 3rd	26	26	100.0%

b. *Students Below GLE*

Only two students scored below GLE in 2010–11; due to the small size of this cohort, results were not included in this report.

c. *First- to Third-Grade Progress*

For informational purposes, SDRT results from 2009–10 were compared to 2011–12 results, i.e., scores from students who took the SDRT in 2009–10 as first graders and again in 2011–12 as third graders. Thirteen of this year’s third graders were administered the SDRT as first graders. On average, students progressed 2.5 GLE over the two years, from an average of 2.5 in first grade to 5.1 in third grade (Table 13).

Table 13			
Downtown Montessori			
Average GLE Advancement From 1st to 3rd Grade			
Based on SDRT Total			
(N = 13)			
Reading	Average GLE		
	1st Grade (2008–2009)	3rd Grade (2010–2011)	Advancement
SDRT Total	2.5	5.1	2.5

Note: Results are rounded to the nearest one tenth.

2. Fourth- Through Eighth-Grade Students

a. *Students at Proficient or Advanced*

The CSRC requires that multiple-year standardized test results be reported for fourth- through eighth-grade students who met proficiency-level expectations in the previous school year. The CSRC expects that at least 75% of students who reached proficiency, i.e., scored proficient or advanced on the WKCE, in 2010–11 will maintain their status in 2011–12.

This year, 29 fourth through eighth graders had scores from consecutive years. In 2010–11, 27 of 29 students scored proficient or advanced in reading, and 21 of the 29 scored proficient or advanced in math. This year, all (100.0%) of the students were able to maintain a proficient or higher level in reading and 85.7% met the goal in math (Table 14).

Table 14			
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.			
Proficiency Level Progress			
for Students Proficient or Advanced in 2010–11			
Based on WKCE			
Grades 4th Through 8th	Students Who Were Proficient/Advanced in 2010–11	Students Who Maintained Proficient/Advanced in 2011–12	
		N	%
Reading	27	27	100.0%
Math	21	18	85.7%

Note: Due to small size of the cohorts, results by grade were not included in the result.

b. Students at Minimal or Basic

In addition to examining progress for students who met expectations, the CSRC requires the school to report advancement for students who did not meet proficiency-level expectations in reading and/or math in the previous academic year. Two students scored minimal or basic in reading, and eight scored minimal or basic in math. Due to the small size of these cohorts, results could not be included in this report.

G. School Scorecard

In the 2009–10 school year, the CSRC piloted a scorecard for each school that it charters. The scorecard includes multiple measures of student academic progress such as performance on standardized tests and local measures, as well as point-in-time academic achievement and engagement elements such as attendance and student and teacher retention and return. The score provides a summary indicator of school performance. In addition, the CSRC intends to examine scorecard results from all city-chartered schools over the past three years and establish policies that will guide decisions about contract renewal, probationary status, and school closure.

The school scored 87.4% on the scorecard this year. This compares to 88.6% on the school's 2010–11 scorecard and 86.4% on the 2009–10 scorecard. Please see Appendix D for school scorecard information.

H. Annual Review of the School's Adequate Yearly Progress

Since passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), school performance in Wisconsin has been measured by Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP consists of four objectives: test participation, graduation rate or attendance rate, and achieving a designated proficiency rate on two academic indicators—reading and mathematics.

In July 2012, State Superintendent Tony Evers announced that Wisconsin's request for waivers from certain provisions of NCLB, including the AYP designation, was approved by the US Department of Education. AYP will be replaced with an alternate school progress indicator as part of a larger accountability system developed by the Wisconsin DPI, that goes into effect in the 2012–13 school year. Therefore, there is no AYP determination for 2011–12 as the department transitions to the new accountability system. For more information please see the DPI website: <http://dpi.wi.gov/oea/acct/accountability.html>.

I. Parent/Teacher/Board Satisfaction Regarding Student Academic Progress

Based on parent surveys, most parents indicated that the program of instruction was excellent (76.7%) or good (20.9%) and that teacher performance was excellent (72.1%) or good (25.6%). In addition, 84.9% of parents indicated that the school's contribution to their child's learning was "excellent" or "good" (11.6%). Most teachers also rated the school's contribution to student learning as excellent or good.

When asked about satisfaction with student academic progress, 64% of the parents surveyed rated their child's academic progress as excellent and 30.2% as good. Four of the nine teachers interviewed were very satisfied with the students' academic progress, the other five were somewhat satisfied. Most of the board members (five of seven) were very satisfied, while two indicated they were somewhat satisfied with the students' academic progress.

IV. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report covers the 14th year of Downtown Montessori's operation as a City of Milwaukee charter school. The school has met all provisions of its contract with the City of Milwaukee and the subsequent requirements of the CSRC. In addition, the school scored 87.4% on the scorecard.

Based on current and past contract compliance and the scorecard results, CRC recommends that Downtown Montessori continue regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting; and that the school be considered eligible for charter contract renewal.

Appendix A

Contract Compliance Chart

Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.

**Overview of Compliance for Education-Related Contract Provisions
2011-12**

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	Charter school operation under the days and hours indicated in its calendar	p. 13	Met
Section I, C	Educational methods	p. 3	Met
Section I, D	Administration of required standardized tests	p. 26	Met
Section I, D	Academic criteria #1: Maintain local measures, showing pupil growth in demonstrating curricular goals in reading, math, writing, and special education.	p. 18	Met
Section I, D	Academic criteria #2: Year-to-year achievement measures:		
	a. 2nd- and 3rd-grade students at or above grade level in reading: At least 75% will maintain at or above grade-level status.	a. p. 37	a. Met
	b. 4th- through 8th-grade students proficient or advanced in reading: At least 75.0% maintain proficiency level.	b. p. 38	b. Met
	c. 4th- through 8th-grade students proficient or advanced in mathematics: At least 75.0% maintain proficiency level.	c. p. 38	c. Met
Section I, D	Academic criteria #3: Year-to-year achievement measures:		
	a. 2nd- and 3rd-grade students with below-grade-level scores in reading: Advance more than 1.0 GLE in reading.	a. p. 37	a. N/A*
	b. 4th- through 8th-grade students below proficient level in reading: At least 60% will advance one level of proficiency or to the next quartile within the proficiency level range.	b. p. 39	b. N/A*
	c. 4th- through 8th-grade students below proficient level in math: At least 60% will advance one level of proficiency or to the next quartile within the proficiency level range.	c. p. 39	c. N/A*
Section I, E	Parental involvement	p. 8	Met
Section I, F	Instructional staff hold a DPI license or permit to teach	p. 7	Met
Section I, I	Pupil database information, including special education need students	p. 11	Met
Section I, K	Discipline procedures	p. 9	Met

*Group size too small; there were very few students below grade level.

Appendix B

Outcome Measures Agreement Memo

Downtown Montessori Academy²³
2507 South Graham Street
Milwaukee, WI 53207
Student Learning Memorandum
2011–12 School Year

The following procedures, goals and outcome measures will be used for the 2011–12 school year monitoring of the education programs of Downtown Montessori. The data will be provided to Children’s Research Center, the monitoring agent contracted by the City of Milwaukee, Charter School Review Committee.

Attendance:

The school will maintain an average daily attendance rate of 85%. Attendance rates will be reported as present, excused absence, and unexcused absence. Present is defined as having been present for at least half of the day.

Enrollment:

The school will record the enrollment date for every student. Upon admission, individual student information including Wisconsin Student Number (WSN), name, grade, gender, race/ethnicity, eligibility for free/reduced lunch and special education status will be added to the school database

Termination:

The date and reason for every student leaving the school will be recorded in the school database.

Parent Conferences:

A parent or guardian of all students will participate in all of the scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Dates for the events and names of the parent participants will be recorded by the school for each student. Conferences may occur in person or by phone.

Parent Contract:

Ninety five percent (95%) of parents will fulfill the requirements of the parent contract related to hours of involvement.

Special Education Needs Students:

The school will maintain updated records on all special education students including date of team assessment, assessment outcome, IEP completion date, IEP review dates and any reassessment results.

Academic Achievement: Local Measures:

Children’s House (K3, K4, K5)

Students attending the Children’s House (K3, K4, and K5) will demonstrate progress in acquiring skills in the area of practical life, sensorial discrimination, mathematical development, language and culture. Each student’s development will be reported to their parents on report

²³Mathematical Connections, A Bridge to Algebra and Geometry, published by McDougall Littell/Houghton Mifflin.

cards and this information will be collected in Montessori Records Express (MRX). The following scale will be used to track the skill level and change in skill acquisition:

- 1 – Presented
- 2 – Practiced
- 3 – Improving
- 4 – Mastered/Proficient

By the end of the year, students who have attended all year will have become proficient or shown improvement (presented to practiced, practiced to improving, or presented to improving) in grade level skills in each of the areas. If students initially were proficient in a skill, they will maintain proficiency in that skill.

Grade level indicators (representative skills) from the continuum for each area will be extracted for submission to CRC. All students will be assessed on all representative skills.

Elementary (Grades one through eight)

Reading: Grades one through four

During the initial weeks of school each student will be administered the McGraw Hill placement test to identify whether they exhibited basic, minimal, or proficient skills in reading at their current grade level. The scores for each level are: below 50%: basic; 50% to 70%: minimal; and 71 to 85% (or above): proficient.

Students will be provided with level reading material in the context of the “Daily Five”.²⁴

Students who were basic or minimal in the fall, will be administered the same placement test after May 1, 2012. These students will improve their score by at least 10% or will attain proficiency at their current grade level by the end of the year.

Students who were proficient in the fall, will be administered the next grade level placement test after May 1, 2012. These students will demonstrate proficiency at the next grade level placement test.

Literacy: Grades four through six

All fourth through sixth graders will be assessed in literacy at beginning of the year and the end of the year in each of the following areas: vocabulary, oral reading fluency, and grammar.

Vocabulary

Using the tests included in the *Roots of Language Series*,²⁵ students who take both the vocabulary pretest at the beginning of the year and the final vocabulary test at the end of the year

²⁴ *The Daily Five* is a series of literacy tasks which students complete daily while the teacher meets with small groups or confers with individuals.

²⁵ *Roots of Language Series*, Published by Dearon Teacher Aids, a division of David S. Lake Publishers

will show progress as measured by comparing the pretest percentage score with the final test percentage score.

Students who were basic or minimal in the fall will improve their vocabulary score by at least 10% or will attain proficiency. Students who were proficient on the pretest will maintain proficiency in the last marking period. The scores for each level are: Below 50%: basic; 50% to 70%: minimal; and 71 to 85% (or above): proficient.

Oral Reading Fluency

Using the Macmillan/McGraw Hill Fluency Test, students who take both the beginning and end of the year tests will show progress as measured by comparing the initial test percentage score with the final test percentage score.

Students who were basic or minimal in the fall will improve their vocabulary score by at least 10% or will attain proficiency. Students who were proficient on the pretest will maintain proficiency in the last marking period. The scores for each level are: Below 50%: basic; 50% to 70%: minimal; and 71 to 85% (or above): proficient.

Grammar

The grammar curriculum is taken from two sources: *Grammar Works*²⁶ and *Grammar*.²⁷ By the end of the year, students will demonstrate grade level grammatical skills by scoring at least 71% on the teacher developed final test.

Literacy: Grades seven through eight

Seventh- and eighth-grade students will demonstrate progress in literacy as measured by comparing the literacy grade (in percentage form) on the first marking period with the literacy grade (in percentage form) on the last marking period.²⁸ Grades for completed projects, group work, study guide questions, themes and vocabulary will be averaged for each student to yield an overall literacy grade in percentage form for these marking periods. These data will be entered into MRX. If students were proficient in the first marking period, they will maintain proficiency. Proficiency is defined as an average of 85%.

Writing: Grades one through eight

All students will maintain or improve writing skills as measured by comparing grade level, same topic writing samples taken no later than October 15, 2011 and again after May 1, 2012. The measure used will be the Six Traits of Writing which includes consistent use, across all grades, of a five point rubric for each of the six traits.²⁹ The skill areas chosen for each grade level are as follows:

²⁶ Grammar Works, published by Scholastic

²⁷ Grammar, published by Instructional Fair, Inc.

²⁸ Literacy is taught in the context of project based learning using an approach developed by Betsy Coe.

²⁹ The six traits of writing are organization, fluency, conventions, ideas, voice and word choice,

- Grades one through three will focus on organization and conventions
- Grades four through six will focus on all 6 traits
- Grades seven through eight will focus on organization, fluency and conventions

The average of these traits for each sample will be used for comparison data.

Mathematics: Grades one through six

Students attending first through sixth grades will demonstrate progress in acquiring the Montessori sequential math skills. Each student's development will be reported to their parents on report cards and this information will be collected in Montessori Records Express (MRX). The following scale will be used to track the skill level and change in skill acquisition:

- 1 – Presented
- 2 – Practiced
- 3 – Improving
- 4 – Mastered/Proficient

By the end of the year, students who have attended all year will have become proficient or show improvement (e.g., from presented to practiced, practiced to improving, or presented to improving) in grade level math skills. If students were initially proficient in a skill, they will maintain proficiency in that skill.

Grade level indicators (representative math skills expected at each grade level) will be extracted from the continuum for submission to CRC. All students will be assessed on all representative skills.

Mathematics: Grades seven through eight

All seventh- and eighth-grade students are using Mathematical Connections (note that the Mathematical Connections curriculum replaced the school's Connected Math curriculum this year). All students who scored at least 85% on the first chapter test, will score at least 85% on the final chapter test of the year.

Students who scored below 85% on the first chapter test will improve at least 10% on their final chapter test.

Special Education Students

Students who have active IEP's will demonstrate progress toward meeting their IEP goals *at the time of their annual review or re-evaluation*. Progress will be demonstrated by reporting the number of goals on the IEP and the number of goals that have been met. Please 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.

Academic Achievement: Standardized Measures

The following standardized test measures will assess academic achievements in reading and mathematics.

Grades 1 - 3 **Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test** will be administered between April 17th and May 12th. The first year testing will serve as baseline data. Progress will be assessed based on the results of the testing in reading in the second and subsequent years.

Grade 3 - 8 **WKCE** will be administered in the fall in the timeframe defined by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. All students will be tested for proficiency in reading and math. Fourth grade and eighth grade students will also be tested in science, social studies, and language arts. Fourth and eighth grade writing skills will also be assessed.

Data Addendum

This addendum has been developed to clarify the data collection and submission process related to each of the outcomes stated in the learning memo for the 2011–12 academic year. Additionally, there are important principles applicable to all data collection that must be considered.

1. All students attending the school at any time during the 2011–12 academic year should be included in all student data files. This includes students who enroll after the first day of school and students who withdraw before the end of the school year. Be sure to include each student's unique Wisconsin student number (WSN) and the school-based ID number in each data file.
2. All data fields must be completed for each student enrolled at any time during the school year. If a student is not enrolled when a measure is completed, record NE to indicate "not enrolled." If the measure did not apply to the student for another reason, enter NA for that student to indicate "not applicable." NE may occur if a student enrolls after the beginning of the school year or withdraws prior to the end of the school year. NA may apply when a student is absent when a measure is completed.
3. Record and submit a score/response for each student. Please do not submit aggregate data (e.g., 14 students scored 75.0%, or the attendance rate was 92.0%).

Staff person(s) responsible for year-end data submission: Virginia Flynn

Data due to CRC: Within 10 days following the last day of student attendance.

Learning Memo Section/Outcome	Data Description	Location of Data	Person(s) Responsible for Collecting Data
<p>Student Roster:</p> <p>Student identification</p> <p>Demographics</p> <p>Enrollment</p> <p>Termination</p> <p>Attendance</p>	<p>Create a column for each of the following. Include for all students enrolled at any time during the school year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSN • School-based student ID • Student name • Grade level • Race/ethnicity • Gender (M/F) • Enrollment date • Termination date, or NA if the student did not withdraw • Reason for termination, if applicable • The number of days the student was enrolled at the school this year (number of days expected attendance) • The number of days the student attended this year • The number of excused absences this year • The number of unexcused absences this year • Indicate if the student had or was assessed for special education needs during the school year (Yes and eligible, Yes and not eligible, or No) • Free/reduced lunch status (free, reduced, full pay) 	MRX	Liz Becerra
<p>Special Education Needs Students and Academic Achievement:</p> <p>Local Measures</p> <p>IEP Progress</p>	<p>For each student who had or was assessed for special education, i.e., had “Yes and eligible” in the data file above, include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSN • Student name • The special education need, e.g., ED, CD, LD, OHI, etc. • Eligibility Assessment date;(the date the team meets to determine eligibility); • Eligibility re-evaluation date (if not due this year, indicate ‘not due’; this is the three year re-evaluation date to determine if the child is still eligible for special ed. • IEP completion date (this is the date the IEP was developed). 	Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra

Learning Memo Section/Outcome	Data Description	Location of Data	Person(s) Responsible for Collecting Data
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IEP review date (enter the date the IEP was reviewed this year. If the initial IEP was developed this year, enter N/A) • IEP review results, e.g., continue in special education, no longer eligible for special education, or NA • # goals on IEP • # goals met on IEP at the time of the annual review. Enter NA if the IEP was not reviewed this year. 		
Parent Conferences (Note: the parent conferences columns can be added to the study roster data file described above)	Create a column for each of the scheduled conferences as well as for student identification. Include all students enrolled at any time during the school year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student name • WSN • Create one column labeled <u>conference 1</u>. In this column, indicate with a Y or N whether a parent/guardian/adult attended the first conference. If the student was not enrolled at the time of this conference, enter NE. • Create one column labeled <u>conference 2</u>. In this column, indicate with a Y or N whether a parent/guardian/adult attended the second conference. If the student was not enrolled at the time of this conference, enter NE. 	Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra
Parent Contract (note: the parent contract column can be added to the student roster data file described above)	For each student enrolled at any time during the year, include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSN • Student name • Parent fulfilled contract (Y or N) 	Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra
Academic Achievement: Local Measures Children's House (K3–K5)	For each student enrolled at any time during the year, include the following columns. Count skills at the end of the year, based on student report cards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSN • Student name • Number of core grade level representative practical life skills assessed • Number of core grade level 	MRX or Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra

Learning Memo Section/Outcome	Data Description	Location of Data	Person(s) Responsible for Collecting Data
	<p>practical life skills in which student reached proficiency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of core grade level practical life skills in which student showed improvement (not including skills counted as proficient) • Number of core grade level representative sensorial skills assessed • Number of core grade level sensorial skills in which student reached proficiency • Number of core grade level sensorial skills in which student showed improvement (not including skills counted as proficient) • Number of core grade level representative math skills assessed • Number of core grade level math skills in which student reached proficiency • Number of core grade level math skills in which student showed improvement (not including skills counted as proficient) • Number of core grade level representative language skills assessed • Number of core grade level language skills in which student reached proficiency • Number of core grade level language skills in which student showed improvement (not including skills counted as proficient) • Number of core grade level representative culture skills assessed • Number of core grade level culture 		

Learning Memo Section/Outcome	Data Description	Location of Data	Person(s) Responsible for Collecting Data
Mathematics Grades 1–6 Grades 7–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student name • number of core grade level representative math skills assessed • Number of core grade level math skills in which student reached proficient • Number of core grade level math skills in which student showed progress (not including skills counted as proficient) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSN • Student name • First chapter test score (percentage) • Final chapter test score (percentage) 		
Academic Achievement: Required Standardized Measures SDRT Grades 1–3	Create a spreadsheet including all 1st-through 3rd-grade students enrolled at any time during the school year. Include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSN • Student name • Grade • Phonetics scale score • Phonetics GLE • Vocabulary scale score • Vocabulary GLE • Comprehension scale score • Comprehension GLE • Total scale score • Total GLE Please provide the test date(s) in an email or other document.	Excel spreadsheet designed by school	Liz Becerra
Academic Achievement: Standardized Measures WKCE Grades 3–8	For each 3rd- through 8th-grade student enrolled at any time during the school year, include the following. Note that the school can download the WKCE data from the Turnleaf website and is encouraged to do so. The Turnleaf website contains the official WKCE records submitted to DPI. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSN • Student name • Grade • Scale scores for each WKCE test (e.g., math and reading for all grades, plus language, social 	Excel spreadsheet designed by school. CRC encourages the school to download WKCE data from the Turnleaf website and provide the export file to CRC.	Liz Becerra

Learning Memo Section/Outcome	Data Description	Location of Data	Person(s) Responsible for Collecting Data
	<p>studies, and science for fourth and eighth graders).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficiency level for each WKCE test • Percentile for each WKCE test • Writing scores for 4th and 8th graders <p>Note: Enter NE if the student was not enrolled at the time of the test. Enter NA if the test did not apply for another reason.</p> <p>Please provide the test date(s) in an email or other document.</p>		

Appendix C

Trend Information

Year	Number Enrolled at Start of School Year	Number Enrolled During Year	Number Withdrew	Number at the End of School Year	Student Retention (Number and Percentage Enrolled for the Entire Year*)
1998-99	15	0	3	12	N/A
1999-2000	33	0	5	28	N/A
2000-01	46	0	6	40	N/A
2001-02	66	32	32	66	N/A
2002-03	63	18	3	78	N/A
2003-04	74	8	2	80	N/A
2004-05	79	3	3	79	N/A
2005-06	81	0	4	77	N/A
2006-07	62	8	1	69	N/A
2007-08	100	2	9	93	N/A
2008-09*	104	7	6	105	98 (94.2%)
2009-10	121	7	2	126	119 (98.4%)
2010-11	139	7	3	143	136 (97.8%)
2011-12	166	5	5	166	161 (97.0%)

*2008-09 was the first year retention data were included in this report.

Figure C1

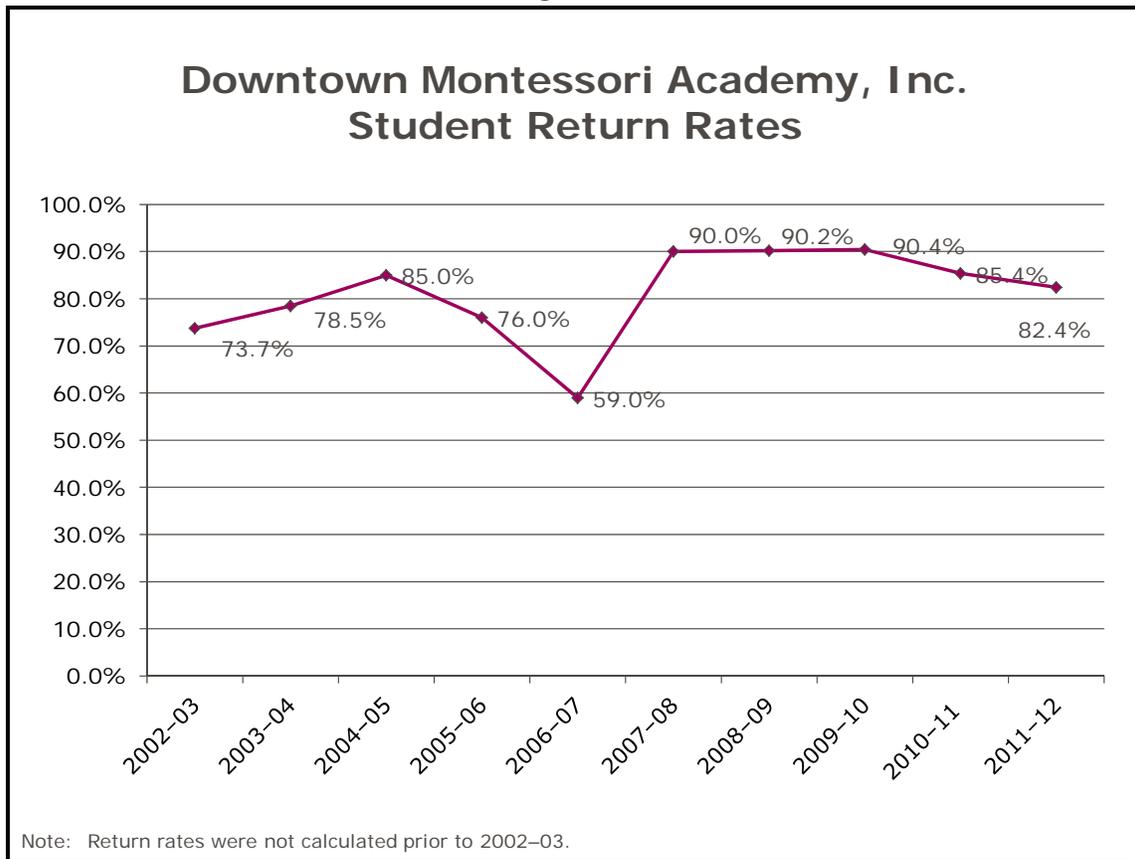
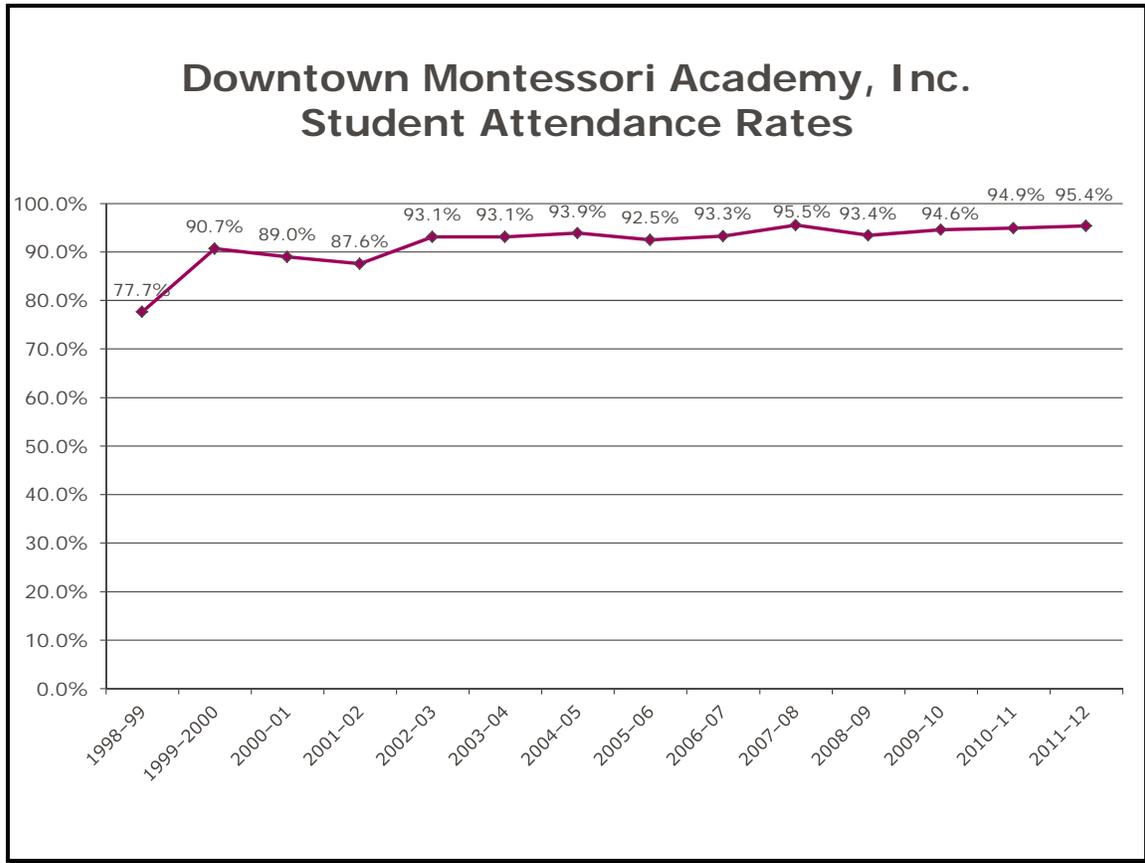


Figure C2



School Year	% Participated
1999-2000	100.0%
2000-01	100.0%
2001-02	100.0%
2002-03	100.0%
2003-04	100.0%
2004-05	100.0%
2005-06	100.0%
2006-07	100.0%
2007-08	100.0%
2008-09	100.0%
2009-10	100.0%
2010-11	100.0%
2011-12	100.0%

Table C3	
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc. SDRT Year-to-Year Progress Students at or Above Grade Level Equivalent Grades 1st – 3rd	
School Year	Percent
2011–12	100.0%

Table C4	
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc. SDRT Year-to-Year Progress Students Below Grade Level Equivalent Grades 1st – 3rd	
School Year	Average GLE Advancement
2011–12	Could not report due to n size

Table C5		
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc. WKCE Year-to-Year Progress Percentage of Students Who Remained Proficient or Showed Advancement Grades 4th – 8th		
School Year	Reading	Math
2007–08	100.0%	91.7%
2008–09	100.0%	100.0%
2009–10	100.0%	95.0%
2010–11	100.0%	100.0%
2011–12	100.0%	85.7%

Note: There were not enough students to include in prior school years.

Table C6		
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc. WKCE Year-to-Year Progress Percentage of Students Who Were Minimal or Basic and Showed Improvement Grades 4th – 8th		
School Year	Reading	Math
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Note: There were too few students who tested below proficiency to include in this table.

Table C7					
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc. Teacher/Instructional Staff Retention Rate					
Teacher Type	Number at Beginning of School Year	Number Started After School Year Began	Number Terminated Employment During the Year	Number at End of School Year	Retention Rate: Number and Rate Employed at School for Entire School Year
2009–10					
Classroom Teachers	6	0	0	6	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	8	0	0	8	100.0%
2010–11					
Classroom Teachers	7	0	0	7	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	9	0	0	9	100.0%
2011–12					
Classroom Teachers	8	0	0	8	100%
All Instructional Staff	9	0	0	9	100%

Table C8			
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc. Teacher/Instructional Staff Return Rate			
Teacher Type	Number at End of Prior School Year	Number* Returned at Beginning of Current School Year	Return Rate
2009–10			
Classroom Teachers	6	6	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	7	7	100.0%
2010–11			
Classroom Teachers	7	7	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	2	2	100.0%
2011–12			
Classroom Teachers	7	7	100.0%
All Instructional Staff	9	7	77.8%

Only those staff who were eligible to return are considered in these calculations. If a teacher or instructional staff member was not asked back, he/she was no longer eligible.

Table C9		
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.		
Adequate Yearly Progress		
School Year	Met	Improvement Status
1999–2000	N/A	N/A
2000–01	N/A	N/A
2001–02	N/A	N/A
2002–03	N/A	Satisfactory
2003–04	N/A	Satisfactory
2004–05	Yes	Satisfactory
2005–06	Yes	Satisfactory
2006–07	Yes	Satisfactory
2007–08	Yes	Satisfactory
2008–09	Yes	Satisfactory
2009–10	Yes	Satisfactory
2010–11	Yes	Satisfactory
2011–12	N/A	N/A

Table C10	
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.	
Scorecard	
School Year	Scorecard Result
2009–10	86.4%
2010–11	88.6%
2011–12	87.4%

Appendix D

School Scorecard

**City of Milwaukee Charter School Review Committee
Pilot School Scorecard**

r: 4/11

K5-8TH GRADE

STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 1-3		
• SDRT—% remained at or above GL	(4.0)	10%
• SDRT—% below GL who improved more than 1 GL	(6.0)	

STUDENT ACADEMIC PROGRESS: GRADES 3-8		
• WKCE reading—% maintained proficient and advanced	(7.5)	35%
• WKCE math—% maintained proficient and advanced	(7.5)	
• WKCE reading—% below proficient who progressed	(10.0)	
• WKCE math—% below proficient who progressed	(10.0)	

LOCAL MEASURES		
• % met reading	(3.75)	15%
• % met math	(3.75)	
• % met writing	(3.75)	
• % met special education	(3.75)	

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADES 3-8		
• WKCE reading—% proficient or advanced	(7.5)	15%
• WKCE math—% proficient or advanced	(7.5)	

ENGAGEMENT		
• Student attendance	(5.0)	25%
• 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		
• EXPLORE to PLAN—composite score at or above 17 on EXPLORE and at or above 18 on PLAN	(5)	30%
• EXPLORE to PLAN—composite score of less than 17 on EXPLORE but increased 1 or more on PLAN	(10)	
• Adequate credits to move from 9th to 10th grade	(5)	
• Adequate credits to move from 10th to 11th grade	(5)	
• DPI graduation rate	(5)	

POST-SECONDARY READINESS: GRADES 11 and 12		
• Post-secondary acceptance for graduates (college, university, technical school, military)	(10)	15%
• % of 11th/12th graders tested	(2.5)	
• % of graduates with ACT composite score of 21.25 or more	(2.5)	

LOCAL MEASURES		
• % met reading	(3.75)	15%
• % met math	(3.75)	
• % met writing	(3.75)	
• % met special education	(3.75)	

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: GRADE 10		
• WKCE reading—% proficient and advanced	(7.5)	15%
• WKCE math—% proficient and advanced	(7.5)	

ENGAGEMENT		
• Student attendance	(5.0)	25%
• Student reenrollment	(5.0)	
• Student retention	(5.0)	
• Teacher retention	(5.0)	
• Teacher return*	(5.0)	

*Teachers not offered continuing contracts are excluded when calculating this rate.

Note: If a school has less than 10 students in any cell on this scorecard, CRC does not report these data. This practice was adopted to protect student identity. Therefore, these cells will be reported as not available (NA) on the scorecard. The total score will be calculated to reflect each school's denominator.

Charter School Review Committee Pilot Scorecard 2011–12 School Year Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc. (K–8)					
Area	Measure	Max. Points	% Total Score (out of 100)	Performance	Points Earned
Student Academic Progress Grades 1–3	SDRT: % remained at or above GL	4.0	10%	100.0%	4.0
	SDRT: % below GL who improved more than 1 GL	NA(6.0)		NA	NA
Student Academic Progress Grades 3–8	WKCE reading: % maintained proficient or advanced	7.5	35%	100.0%	7.5
	WKCE math: % maintained proficient or advanced	7.5		85.7%	6.4
	WKCE reading: % below proficient who progressed	NA(10.0)		NA	NA
	WKCE math: % below proficient who progressed	NA(10.0)		NA	NA
Local Measures	% met reading	3.75	15%	83.0%	3.1
	% met math	3.75		74.2%	2.8
	% met writing	3.75		81.6%	3.1
	% met special education	3.75		83.3%	3.1
Student Achievement Grades 3–8	WKCE reading: % proficient or advanced	7.5	15%	94.4%	7.1
	WKCE math: % proficient or advanced	7.5		64.8%	4.9
Engagement	Student attendance	5.0	25%	95.4%	4.8
	Student reenrollment	5.0		82.4%	4.1
	Student retention	5.0		97.0%	4.9
	Teacher retention rate	5.0		100.0%	5.0
	Teacher return rate	5.0		78.0%	3.9
TOTAL		74			64.7 (87.4%)

Note: To protect student identity, fewer than 10 students in any cell is not reported on this scorecard; these cells are reported as not available (NA). The percentage is calculated based on the modified denominator, rather than 100 possible points.

Appendix E

Teacher Interviews

Teacher Interviews

In the spring of 2012, CRC interviewed all nine teachers at the school, including the reading specialist, regarding their reasons for teaching at and overall satisfaction with the school. Teachers were responsible for two to 32 students at a given time. Two teachers indicated that they share classroom responsibility with another teacher for at least one period of the day. Seven teachers reported that they did not share classroom responsibility with another teacher. One teacher had been teaching at the school for 18 years, one for 13 years, one for 12 years, one for 10 years, one for seven years, one for four years, one for three years, and two for one year. All teachers indicated that they routinely use data to make decisions in the classroom and that the school leadership used data to make school-wide decisions. Eight teachers stated that their performance reviews occurred annually and one teacher reported that a performance review occurred every semester. Seven teachers indicated that they receive informal feedback and suggestions as well as hold discussions regarding students' progress monthly. Two teachers reported that they did not have discussions regarding students' progress or receive informal feedback. One teacher was satisfied with the review process, five teachers were somewhat satisfied with the review process, and three teachers had not received their performance reviews. All teachers interviewed reported that they plan to continue teaching at the school.

Teachers were asked to rate the importance of various reasons for teaching at the school. Teachers rated educational methodology, discipline, general atmosphere, administrative leadership, students, type of school, and class size as somewhat important or very important for teaching at this school. See Table E1 for more details.

Reason	Importance			
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Not at All Important
Location	2	1	2	4
Financial	3	3	1	2
Educational methodology	9	0	0	0
Age/grade level of students	5	4	0	0
Discipline	7	2	0	0
General atmosphere	7	2	0	0
Class size	3	5	1	0
Type of school	6	2	1	0
Parental involvement	3	4	1	1
Administrative leadership	7	2	0	0
Colleagues	5	4	0	0
Students	6	3	0	0

Teachers were asked whether any additional criteria influenced their decision to continue teaching at the school. One teacher each mentioned the following: the school’s commitment to becoming a green school; a great school; he/she likes the community; enjoys the program; the supportive administration; and “this is where I am meant to be.”

In terms of overall evaluation of the school, teachers were asked 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 class size, professional support, and professional development opportunities as excellent. Four of the nine teachers listed the school’s progress toward becoming an excellent school as excellent and the remaining five teachers listed the school’s progress as good.

Table E2				
Downtown Montessori School Performance Rating 2011–12 (N = 9)				
Area	Rating			
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Class size	6	3	0	0
2. Materials and equipment	2	1	0	0
3. Student assessment plan	2	1	0	0
3a. Local measures	1	1	1	0
3b. Standardized tests	3	6	0	0
3c. Progress reports	2	7	0	0
4. Shared leadership, decision making, and accountability	4	4	1	0
5. Professional support	5	3	1	0
6. Professional development opportunities	5	2	2	0
7. Progress toward becoming an excellent school	4	5	0	0

On a satisfaction rating scale ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied, teachers responded at the satisfied end of the response range in most areas. Areas where the teachers expressed the most satisfaction were with the program of instruction, student-teacher ratio, professional support staff performance, principal's performance, discipline policy, instructional support, and opportunities for continuing education. Table E3 lists all of the teachers' responses.

Table E3					
Downtown Montessori Teacher Satisfaction 2011-12 (N = 9)					
Performance Measure	Response				
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No Opinion/ N/A
Program of instruction	8	1	0	0	0
Enrollment policy and procedure	2	1	1	0	5
Students' academic progress	4	5	0	0	0
Student-teacher ratio	8	1	0	0	0
Discipline policy	7	1	1	0	0
Adherence to discipline policy	5	3	1	0	0
Instructional support	6	3	0	0	0
Parent-teacher relationships	5	2	2	0	0
Teacher collaboration to plan learning experiences	3	4	2	0	0
Parent involvement	5	2	1	1	0
Community/business involvement	4	3	0	0	2
Performance as a teacher	4	5	0	0	0
Principal's performance	7	1	1	0	0
Professional support staff performance	8	1	0	0	0
Opportunities for teacher involvement	3	4	1	0	1
Opportunities for continuing education	6	2	1	0	0
Frequency of staff meetings	5	2	1	1	0
Effectiveness of staff meetings	5	2	1	1	0

When teachers were asked to name three things they liked most about the school, teachers noted the following:

- Montessori approach (four teachers);
- Flexibility in classroom (four teachers);
- Size of school (four teachers);
- Community/atmosphere (three teachers);
- Administration (three teachers);
- Parental involvement (two teachers); and
- One teacher each said giving input into the learning memo; focus on environment; supportive colleagues; the give and take between specialists and classroom teachers; level of experience of teachers; and becoming a neighborhood school.

Teachers most often mentioned the following as least liked about the school:

- Lack of benefits (two teachers);
- Lack of common space for teachers (three teachers);
- Building size (too small) (two teachers);
- Funding (two teachers); and
- One teacher each said lack of gym; effective and efficient communication procedures are lacking; lack of orientation and mentoring for new hires; lack of inclusiveness in staff meetings; building needs updates; would like a more diverse population; playground; bathrooms; lack of technology in lower elementary classrooms; lack of parental involvement; low enrollment; and the attendance policy.

When asked what barriers could affect their decision to remain at the school, one teacher each said the lack of notice regarding permanency of job in the future; an increase in class size; school relocation; and a drastic change in the administration.

When asked to provide a suggestion to improve the school, three teachers said to renovate the school bathrooms and two teachers said to create more space for additional areas. One teacher each said to implement an effective communication procedure and provide a stage for student performances.

When asked for a suggestion to improve the classroom, two teachers said to add a classroom assistant. One teacher each said to have one day per week without special classes; add new shelves; add new windows; increase technology; add more students to upper elementary classes; and split the upper elementary classrooms into two distinct classrooms.

Teachers were also asked to rate the school's contribution to students' academic progress. On a scale of poor, fair, good, or excellent, six of the teachers rated the school's contribution as excellent and the remaining three rated the school's contribution as good.

Appendix F

Parent Surveys

Parent Surveys

Parent opinions are qualitative in nature and provide a valuable measurement of school performance. To determine how parents heard about the school, why they elected to send their children to the school, parental involvement with the school, and an overall evaluation of the school, parents were provided with a survey during the March parent-teacher conferences. Each parent was asked to complete the survey, place it in a sealed envelope, and return it to the school. CRC then contacted families who did not complete a survey and conducted the survey over the telephone. All completed survey forms were forwarded to CRC for data entry. At the time of this report, 86 family surveys, representing parents of 116 of 168 (69.1%) children, had been completed and submitted to CRC. Results are presented below.

Most parents (52.3%) heard about the school from friends or relatives. Others heard about the school through the television/radio/or Internet (24.4%), newspaper (4.7%), or community center (2.3%). Some (32.6%) parents heard about the school from other sources. See table F1.

Table F1		
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.		
How Parents Learned About the School		
2011–12		
(N = 86)		
Method	Answer	
	N	%
Friends/Relatives	45	52.3%
TV/Radio/Internet	21	24.4%
Newspaper	4	4.7%
Community Center	2	2.3%
Other*	28	32.6%

*Five parents knew about the school because they live in the neighborhood, six discovered the school by conducting their own research, and three parents discovered the school from signage. One parent each said: from a former client, Bay View community event, drove by school several years ago, found school by helping another friend, open house, parenting groups, word of mouth, and yellow pages.

Parents chose to send their children to Downtown Montessori for a variety of reasons. Table F2 provides information relating to the various factors that influenced parents' decisions to enroll their children in Downtown Montessori. Parents could rate each factor as ranging from being very important to not at all important when choosing a school. Most parents (86.0%) rated the school's educational methodology as being a very important reason for selecting this school. In addition, many parents (89.5%) indicated that the school's general atmosphere was very important to them when choosing this school. Please see table F2 for complete information.

Table F2

**Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.
Parent Reasons for Choosing the School
2011–12
(N = 86)**

Factors	Response									
	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Somewhat Unimportant		Not at All Important		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Location	35	40.7%	32	37.2%	12	14.0%	6	7.0%	1	1.2%
Other children or relative already attending this school	15	17.4%	11	12.8%	6	7.0%	52	60.5%	2	2.3%
Educational methodology	74	86.0%	10	11.6%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%	1	1.2%
Range of grades in school	46	53.5%	31	36.0%	5	5.8%	3	3.5%	1	1.2%
Discipline	33	38.4%	27	31.4%	15	17.4%	10	11.6%	1	1.2%
General atmosphere	77	89.5%	8	9.3%	0	0.0%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%
Class size	61	70.9%	18	20.9%	4	4.7%	3	3.5%	0	0.0%
Recommendation of family and friends	26	30.2%	24	27.9%	14	16.3%	20	23.3%	2	2.3%
Opportunities for parental participation	39	45.3%	31	36.0%	8	9.3%	6	7.0%	2	2.3%
School safety	69	80.2%	14	16.3%	2	2.3%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%
Frustration with previous school	10	11.6%	10	11.6%	7	8.1%	48	55.8%	11	12.8%

Some parents (48 of 86, or 55.8%) identified other reasons for enrolling their children into the school. Other reasons included a desire for the Montessori approach to education, diversity, shared values (green and healthy), advanced training received by teachers, and/or strong reputation.

Parental involvement was utilized as an additional measure of satisfaction with the school. Parental involvement was measured by the number of contacts between the school and the parent(s) and parents' participation in educational activities in the home.

Parents and the school were in contact for a variety of reasons, including the children's academic performance and behavior, assisting in the classroom, or engaging in fundraising activities. For example, 33.7% of parents reported contact with the school five or more times regarding their child's academic progress. Table F3 provides complete information relating to the type and frequency of parental contact between parents and the school.

Table F3										
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.										
Parent-School Contacts										
2011-12										
(N = 86)										
Areas of Contact	Number of Contacts									
	0 Times		1-2 Times		3-4 Times		5+ Times		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Your child(ren)'s academic performance	1	1.2%	22	25.6%	33	38.4%	29	33.7%	1	1.2%
Classes your child(ren) took	11	12.8%	36	41.9%	13	15.1%	14	16.3%	8	9.3%
Your child(ren)'s behavior	20	23.3%	24	27.9%	20	23.3%	21	24.4%	1	1.2%
Participating in fundraising	1	1.2%	12	14.0%	26	30.2%	42	48.8%	4	4.7%
Providing information for school records	12	14.0%	57	66.3%	9	10.5%	3	3.5%	5	5.8%
Helping in the classroom	7	8.1%	32	37.2%	28	32.6%	17	19.8%	2	2.3%
Other*	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	7.0%	80	93.0%

*Other types of contact included: general updates, calls when student was ill, field trip participation, and weekly newsletter.

The second measure of parental participation was the extent to which parents engaged in educational activities while at home. During a typical week, 56.6% of 83 parents of younger children (K4 through fifth grade) worked on homework with their children; 86.8% of parents worked on arithmetic or math with their child; 96.4% of parents read to or with their child; 61.4% watched educational programs on television; and 86.7% participated in activities such as sports, library visits, or museum visits with their child. Parents of older children (sixth through eighth grades) engaged in similar activities during the week. For example, 75.0% of eight parents monitored homework completion, 25.0% discussed their child's post-secondary plans with the child, 75.0% watched educational programs on television, 50.0% participated in activities outside of school, and 12.5% discussed their child's progress toward graduating with the child.

Parents were then asked to comment on what they liked best about the school. Responses were categorized by similarities. Approximately 27.9% of parents liked the Montessori approach and 18.6% of parents indicated that they liked the teachers/staff. Table F4 shows all of the parents' responses.

Table F4		
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.		
Most Liked by Parents About the School		
2011-12		
(N = 86)		
Response	N	%
Montessori approach	24	27.9%
Class/school size	16	18.6%
Teachers/staff	16	18.6%

Table F4		
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.		
Most Liked by Parents About the School		
2011–12		
(N = 86)		
Response	N	%
Atmosphere/community	13	15.1%
Communication	5	5.8%
Location	2	2.3%
Other*	10	11.6%

*Other responses included: children are responsible, each child is treated as an individual learner, emotional needs are met, flexibility in learning, green culture, respect given to children, and children can work above his/her grade level.

Parents were then asked to comment on what they liked least about the school. Responses were categorized by similarities. Responses included lack of communication (12.8%); physical state of the building (9.3%), and lack of additional classes and/or extracurricular activities (5.8%). See Table F5 for additional information.

Table F5		
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.		
Least Liked by Parents About the School		
2011–12		
(N = 86)		
Response	N	%
Communication	11	12.8%
Physical state of building	8	9.3%
Lack of additional classes	5	5.8%
Lack of extracurricular	5	5.8%
No hot lunch	2	2.3%
Discipline concerns	2	2.3%
Location	2	2.3%
Nothing	3	3.5%
Other*	29	33.7%
No response	19	22.1%

*Other responses included lack of parental involvement, concerns with administration, grouping of children by age, music program needs improvement, need additional staff, consistency of teachers, hard to determine how children are doing in school, and one parent indicated concerns with bullying.

Parents were also asked to rate the school on various aspects including the program of instruction, the school's responsiveness, and progress reports provided to parents/guardians. Table F6 indicates that parents rated the school as good or excellent in most aspects of the academic environment. For

example, most parents indicated that the program of instruction was excellent (76.7%) or good (20.9%) and that teacher performance was excellent (72.1%) or good (25.6%). (Where “no response” was indicated, the parent either had no knowledge of or experience with that aspect or had no opinion.)

Table F6										
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc.										
Parental Satisfaction										
2011–12										
(N = 86)										
Area	Response									
	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Program of instruction	66	76.7%	18	20.9%	2	2.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Ease of enrollment	52	60.5%	29	33.7%	4	4.7%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%
Child’s academic progress	55	64.0%	26	30.2%	5	5.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Student-teacher ratio	54	62.8%	31	36.0%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Discipline methods	49	57.0%	31	36.0%	5	5.8%	0	0.0%	1	1.2%
Parent-teacher relationships	56	65.1%	27	31.4%	3	3.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Communication regarding learning expectations	36	41.9%	34	39.5%	12	14.0%	4	4.7%	0	0.0%
Opportunities for parental involvement	56	65.1%	20	23.3%	8	9.3%	2	2.3%	0	0.0%
Teacher performance	62	72.1%	22	25.6%	2	2.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Principal performance	52	60.5%	26	30.2%	5	5.8%	1	1.2%	2	2.3%
Teacher/principal availability	63	73.3%	19	22.1%	3	3.5%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%
Responsiveness to concerns	54	62.8%	28	32.6%	2	2.3%	0	0.0%	2	2.3%
Progress reports for parents/guardians	52	60.5%	24	27.9%	7	8.1%	1	1.2%	2	2.3%

Parents were then asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements about school staff. Responses related to school staff were very positive. For example, 82.6% of parents indicated that they were comfortable talking with their child’s teacher, and 79.1% of parents indicated that staff recognizes their child’s strengths and weaknesses. Results are summarized below.

Table F7												
Downtown Montessori Academy, Inc. Parental Rating of School Staff 2011-12 (N = 86)												
Statement	Response											
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		No Response	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I am comfortable talking with staff	71	82.6%	12	14.0%	1	1.2%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%	1	1.2%
The staff welcomes suggestions from parents	53	61.6%	19	22.1%	10	11.6%	2	2.3%	0	0.0%	2	2.3%
The staff keeps me informed about my child(ren)'s performance	48	55.8%	30	34.9%	4	4.7%	3	3.5%	0	0.0%	1	1.2%
I am comfortable with how the staff handles discipline	48	55.8%	25	29.1%	6	7.0%	3	3.5%	0	0.0%	4	4.7%
I am satisfied with the number of adult staff available to work with the students	59	68.6%	22	25.6%	4	4.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.2%
I am satisfied with the overall performance of the staff	59	68.6%	23	26.7%	2	2.3%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%	1	1.2%
The staff recognizes my child(ren)'s strengths and weaknesses	68	79.1%	14	16.3%	2	2.3%	1	1.2%	0	0.0%	1	1.2%

Lastly, parental satisfaction was evident in the following results:

- Almost all (81, or 94.2%) parents would recommend this school to other parents;
- Of the 86 surveyed parents, 77 (89.5%) will send their child to the school next year;³⁰
- When asked to rate the school's overall contribution to their child's learning, most (73, or 84.9%) parents indicated "excellent" and 10 (11.6%) parents rated the school "good." Two (2.3%) parents thought the school was "fair" and no parent listed the school's contribution as "poor." One parent did not respond to the question.

³⁰ Five (5.8%) parents indicated that their child would not return to the school next year; and four (4.6%) did not know if their child would return. Reasons for not wanting to re-enroll included one parent who indicated that her son may need a different learning style, another is seeking more traditional schooling, two parents indicated they were moving out of state, one said the commute was too long, and one parent indicated that there were too many age levels in one class.

Appendix G

Student Interviews

Student Interviews

At the end of the school year, CRC staff asked all of the students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades several questions about their school. Responses from the student survey were predominantly positive. All students indicated that they felt safe in school, they learned new things every day, and that their ability in both reading and math had improved. Nearly all students (n=10) stated that the teachers were helpful, and felt that the marks they received on their classwork, homework, and report cards were fair. See Table G1 for additional information.

Table G1			
Downtown Montessori Student Interview 2011-12 (N = 11)			
Question	Answer		
	Yes	No	No Response/ Don't Know/ N/A
1. Do you like your school?	10	1	0
2. Are you learning new things every day?	11	0	0
3. Have you improved in reading?	11	0	0
4. Have you improved in math?	11	0	0
5. Do you use computers at school?	11	0	0
6. Is your school clean?	11	0	0
7. Do you like the school rules?	8	3	0
8. Do you think the school rules are fair?	9	2	0
9. Does your homework help you at school?	8	3	0
10. Do your teachers help you at school?	10	1	0
11. Do you like being in school?	10	1	0
12. Do you feel safe in school?	11	0	0
13. Do people work together in school?	10	1	0
14. Do you feel the marks you get on classwork, homework, and report cards are fair?	11	0	0
15. Do your teachers talk to your parents?	10	1	0
16. Does your school have afterschool activities?	4	7	0
17. Do your teachers talk with you about high school plans?	6	5	0

Students were then asked what they liked best and least about the school. Students liked the following aspects best:

- Teachers (three students);
- Teaching style, i.e., hands-on (three students);
- Class size (two students); and
- One student each said familiar-ness of the school; the freedom; and math class.

When asked what they liked least, students responded as follows:

- Dress code (four students); and
- One student each said school doesn't have a gym; lack of spontaneity in the classroom; not a big social base; demo night; too quiet in the classrooms/strictness; and two students did not provide a response.

Appendix H

Board Member Interviews

Board member opinions are qualitative in nature and provide valuable, although subjective, insight regarding school performance and organizational competency. Downtown Montessori's board of directors consists of seven members supported by the head of school and the executive director. The board designates a president, a secretary, and a treasurer. All seven members of Downtown Montessori's board of directors participated in a phone interview conducted by CRC staff using a prepared interview guide. One of the board members has served on the board more than 10 years, another for five years, one for 1 1/2 years, and two were in their first year as board members. These board members represented experiences in parenting, nonprofits, finances, advertising and marketing, for-profit businesses, the law, and other board membership, including MPS.

The experienced board members participated in strategic planning for the school, all but the newly appointed board members received a presentation on the school's annual academic performance report, and all members reported that they received and approved the school's annual budget and reviewed the school's annual financial audit.

Table H					
Downtown Montessori Board Member Interview Results 2011-12 (N = 7)					
Performance Measure	Response				
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
Program of instruction	6	0	0	0	1
Enrollment policy/procedures	4	1	0	0	2
Students' academic progress	5	2	0	0	0
Student/teacher ratio/class size	7	0	0	0	0
Discipline policy	6	0	0	0	1
Adherence to discipline policy	3	1	0	0	3
Instructional support	5	0	0	0	2
Parent involvement	3	3	0	0	1
Community/business involvement	4	2	0	0	1
Teacher performance	6	0	0	0	1
Principal's performance	7	0	0	0	0
Current role of the board of directors	4	3	0	0	0
Board of directors' performance	5	1	0	0	1
Financial resources to fulfill school's mission	5	2	0	0	0
Commitment of school's leadership	7	0	0	0	0
Safety of the educational environment	7	0	0	0	0

All seven board members rated the school overall as excellent on a scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor.

When asked what they liked best about the school, the board members mentioned a number of different items:

- The Montessori curriculum and philosophy
- Teacher/student ratio and the small size of the school
- Academic results
- Flexibility to meet student needs
- Family atmosphere
- The vision and leadership of the head of school and the interaction between administration and staff
- The teachers' ability to instill love of the learning process
- Financial stability of the school
- Transparency of management to the board of directors
- The effort to solidify the school's presence in the community
- The board's involvement in setting the school's direction and policy

Regarding dislikes, the board members mentioned the following issues:

- Lack of an art program
- Some issues of communication
- Need more of a role in the charter school community
- Math program needs improvement
- Inadequate playground
- Lack of parent-led organization and lack of definition of the purpose and scope of the PTO
- Need more board representation of an outside perspective
- Lack of enough students at the upper grades
- Lack of art and extracurricular activities

When asked for one suggestion for improving the school, the ideas mentioned by three of the board members revolved around increasing enrollment at the school, specifically:

- Strengthen the adolescent program;
- Focus on increasing the student population at the school;
- Develop methods to retain younger students through the eighth grade;
- Expand to high school;
- Develop a succession plan;
- Improve communication with all stakeholders; and
- Continue to improve the classroom physical environment.