



MODERN MONTESSORI

charter school

Modern Montessori Charter School Annual Report

School Year 2020-2021

Board Approved 11.17.21



Who We Are

Rooted in Montessori principles, we offer an authentic Montessori experience with a modern twist, interweaving aspects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Modern Montessori Charter School has approval from the Minnesota Department of Education to operate a preschool, elementary and middle school program, authorized to encompass Pre-K through eighth grade.

Mission

We are a collaborative learning community rooted in Montessori principles integrated with current technology through an innovative, child-centered approach.

Vision

To develop leaders of tomorrow with an intrinsic desire for life-long learning and independent thinking to become citizens who better our world.



Year Opened

Our first operational year was the 2019/2020 school year

Grades Served

Pre-K through 6th Grade were served in the 2020/2021 School Year

Contact Information

Modern Montessori Charter School ISD# 4273-07
111 Dean Avenue West | Champlin, MN 55316
Phone: 612.440.0681
admin@mm-cs.org
www.modernmontessoricharter.org

Executive Leadership Team

Board Chair:

Valerie Blanco - valerie.blanco@mm-cs.org

Director of Operations:

Shawna Heller - shawna.heller@mm-cs.org

Director of Education:

Kristy Fehr - kristy.fehr@mm-cs.org

Authorizer

Innovative Quality Schools (IQS)
P.O. Box 40219 | St. Paul, MN 55104
Phone: 651.234.0900
www.iqsmn.org



Purpose of the Report

This report is set forth to meet the requirements in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.10, Subdivisions 4, 11 and 14 regarding Minnesota charter schools publishing a yearly annual report for authorizers and stakeholders. This report must be approved by the district Board of Directors and is a public document under Minnesota Chapter 13.



School enrollment

At the close of the school year, June 10, 2021, there were 152 students enrolled at MMCS.

Student attrition

MMCS began their second school year with 120 students starting school in September of 2020. While lower than originally anticipated after our open enrollment period and lottery had been conducted, this was still a large increase over the 83 students we ended the previous 19/20 school year with. The school continued to add students throughout the school year growing to a total of 152.

It should also be noted that there was a global pandemic and, per Executive Order, school needed to be offered via distance learning and, at times, in hybrid format. Many of our families chose to give up their spots and homeschool their children. Throughout the year, we were able to add enough new families to counterbalance these losses.

After our lottery, Modern Montessori had a waitlist for Preschool, Kindergarten, and First Grade but was able to clear these throughout the year. We ended the year with one student on the Kindergarten waitlist. Our lottery for the 21/22 open enrollment period had openings in all grades except for first grade due to a full kindergarten class showing intent to continue with us in the fall.



Governance and Management

MMCS was governed by a seven-member Board of Directors for the 2020-2021 school year. This was MMCS' second year of active operations. The school's authorizer is Innovative Quality Schools. The school is managed by Shawna Heller, the school's Director of Operations and Kristy Fehr, the school's Director of Education. Board meetings are held monthly on the third Wednesday of each month.

Staffing

The school had 9 full-time teachers and 3 part-time teachers including seven grade level teachers, two special education teachers, an EL teacher/interventionist, a STEM teacher, music teacher, art teacher and a physical education teacher. The school had a full-time administrative assistant, 11 classroom assistants or paraprofessionals in general education and special education ranging from part-time to full-time, 2 afterschool care workers and a distance learning classroom assistant. The school's technology needs were supported by volunteers.



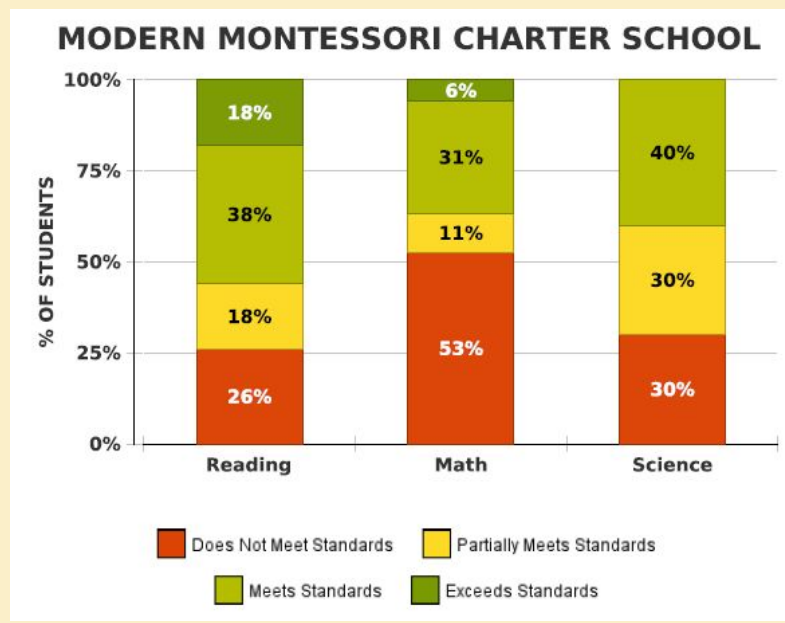
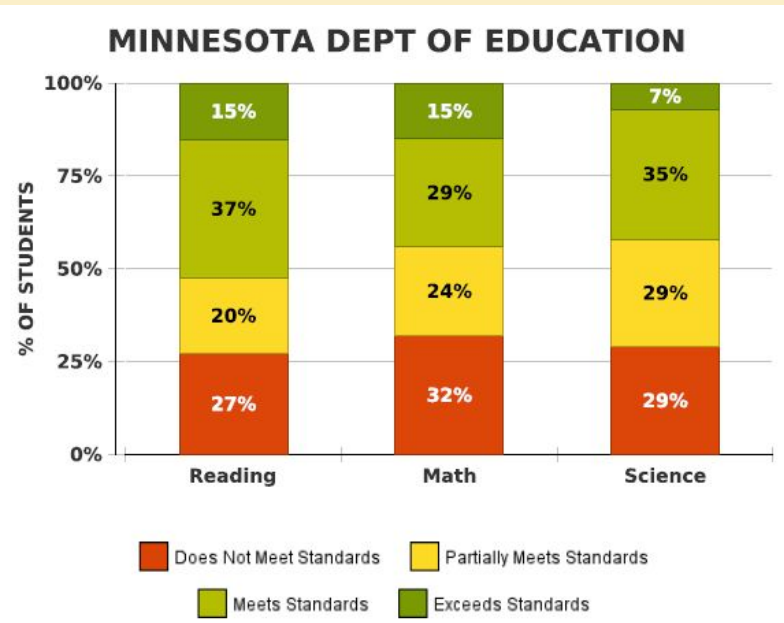
Finances

MMCS finished its second full year of operations with 152 students enrolled and a weighted ADM of 122.41 students in grades K-6. The majority of the school's funding is based on enrollment, which grew throughout the year, and the Federal CSP Grant.

The increased enrollment as well as conservative spending allowed the school to end the FY20-21 school year with an unaudited fund balance of 8.3%.

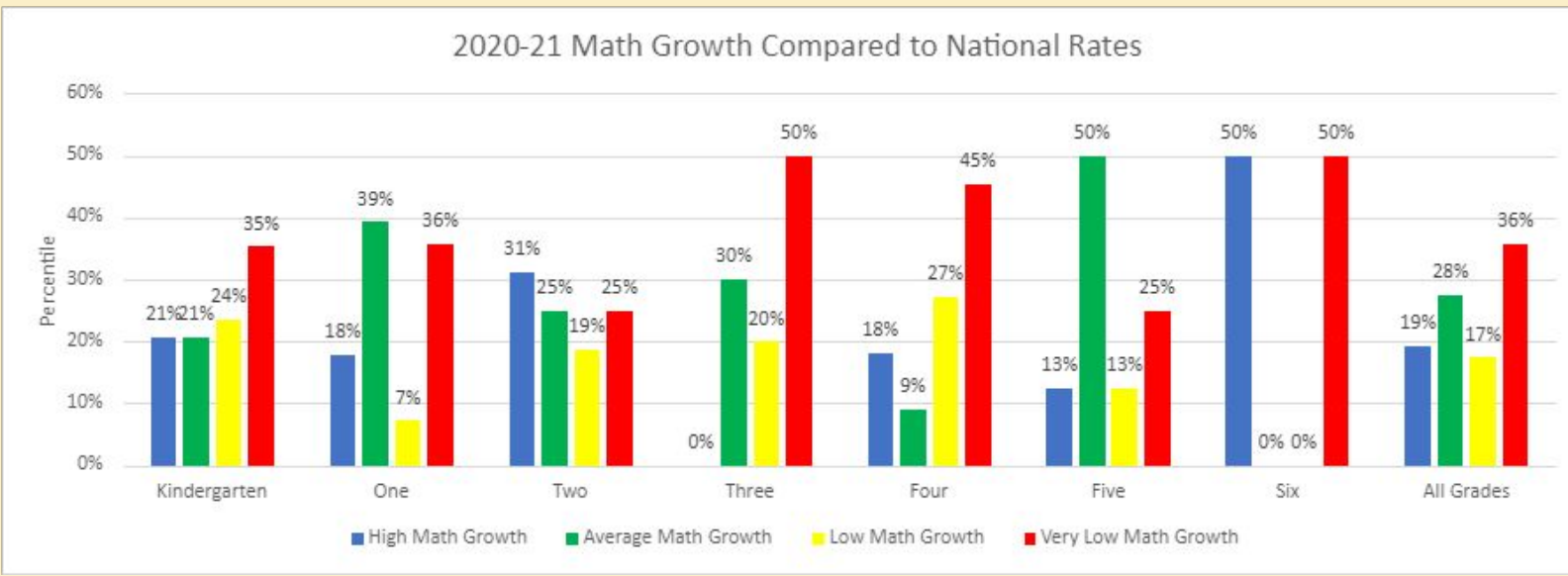
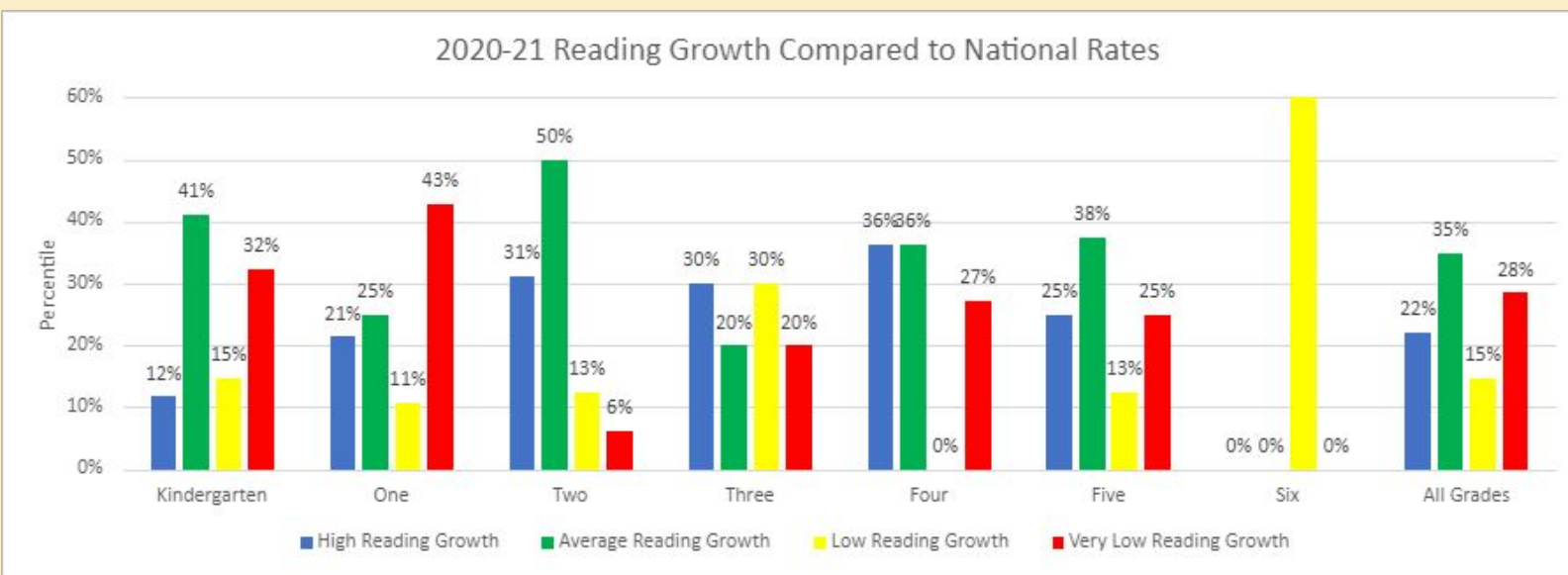
One of the top measures of financial stability in charter schools is fund balance. As the state withholds 10% of state generated revenues every year, a fund balance of 15-30% is generally recommended by financial service providers, auditors and authorizers.

MMCS will strive to achieve this 15% fund balance goal by our fifth operational year. MMCS is pleased to have attained a balance of 8.3% which puts us well on our way to meeting this five-year fund balance goal.



MCA State-Wide Test Scores ↑

↓ FastBridge Internal Testing



Academic Performance

MMCS participated in the Minnesota Department of Education's MCA testing for grades 3 and above. Our test scores are quite comparable to the state scores. MMCS exceeds the state scores in reading with 56% meeting or exceeding standards, but falls a little below state scores in math with 37% vs the state score of 44%. Science is in line at 40% vs 42%.

The school did our own internal FastBridge assessments in English Language Arts and Math in the fall, winter and spring of the 2020-2021 school year. This is our first school year with these three sets of benchmarking data. These will help us start to establish a baseline of targets for the students and staff as goals. Targets are established based on how students did in their first Fastbridge assessment each year.

It should be noted that MMCS operated in a hybrid model from September 2019-January 2020 with February 2020 being the first month where students were allowed to attend school in-person five days per week. Prior to February, students attending in-person two days per week, virtually two days per week and had a project day for the fifth day of the week. Also, approximately 10% of MMCS families chose to have their students attend school 100% virtually for the year.

While these formats were mandated due to the COVID-pandemic, our scores indicate that hybrid and distance learning may not have been the most effective learning environment for all students. Some of our learning data reflects this. Similar trends are being seen nationally.



Innovative practices and implementation

The Montessori Approach

Modern Montessori Charter School is grounded on the research-based Montessori model of instruction. This method has been in practice since 1907 and has continually shown great success among students. It is designed to lead children to ask questions, think for themselves, explore, investigate, and become eager, self-directed learners. Using a carefully prepared environment, teachers are guides utilizing self-correcting, hands-on learning materials and purposeful activities that allow children to learn at their own pace through discovery. This type of meaningful work in an orderly environment fosters concentration, encourages responsibility, independence and confidence, and results in children who love to learn.

In the classroom, Montessori curriculum includes specific, purposeful materials called “works.” These materials are designed with a control of error, or way for the child to check his/her work and to give the child the opportunity to master each skill at his/her own pace. The child is allowed to discover, explore, and master each lesson before moving onto the next work. This gives each student the ability to progress as needed and to spend extra time with each lesson as needed. The teacher observes the student, assisting when necessary, and in this way is able to understand where each individual student is in his/her learning style and level for each subject.

Students will benefit from multiage classrooms where an environment based on respect is at its core. Students will become leaders when given the opportunity to be teachers themselves and assist younger students in the classroom. Younger students will build an intrinsic desire for learning when observing the more challenging work of their older peers.

Montessori education has traditionally been a low- or technology-free environment, but MMCS feels this is an important skill area in which our students need practice and instruction. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) integration will allow students to become proficient with current technology while enriching learning opportunities.



Innovative practices and implementation

Montessori + STEM

Montessori education is well known for its hands-on, student-directed approach to learning. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) also encourages hands-on, active participation from students. Both Montessori and STEM encourage problem-solving, creative thinking, and learning through discovery, which results in children who love to learn.

Modern Montessori looks like students learning how to use valuable technological devices without becoming dependent on them. MMCS students will leave our school equally comfortable navigating an old print encyclopedia as they are accessing information on the Internet. They will be proficient with basic computer skills, keyboarding and word processing. They will know how to operate a variety of technological devices and software programs. Children will receive lessons that encourage engineering, creative thinking and scientific reasoning. These technologies will be integrated seamlessly throughout the day.

STEM-specific classes have been focusing on the engineering design process which helps build a growth mindset. Students learn that trial and error is a natural part of the process and that mistakes help us learn. Students have also been learning how to code using robots and various software. Students engage in more hands-on, in-depth science lessons and experiments throughout the year.



Future Plans

Modern Montessori will seek out connections within our community for instructional partnerships and innovative opportunities. Such connections may be local nature centers, STEM related facilities, farms etc. Anything that will enhance our learning opportunities.

Modern Montessori has had incredible teacher retention thus far with 100% between the 2020/2021 school year and the start of the 2021/2022 year. We will strive to maintain strong working relationships and high levels of job satisfaction amongst our staff. We anticipate the need to hire additional staff again next year as we plan for additional growth in the areas of Upper Elementary and Middle School.

As we reach capacity in our elementary program, our goal is to have students receive the authentic Montessori 3-year looped teacher experience. As our new teachers work towards their Montessori certification, we will continue to align Montessori curriculum to state standards to develop a comprehensive scope and sequence.