

MODERN MONTESSORI *charter school*

Modern Montessori Charter School Annual Report

School Year 2022-2023

Board Adopted 11/15/2023



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

Modern Montessori Charter School's first operational year was the 2019/2020 school year.

Grades Served

Modern Montessori served students in preschool through 6th Grade in the 2022/2023 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

2022-2023 Executive Leadership Team

Board Chair:

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

Executive Director:

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 8, 2023, there were 198 students enrolled at MMCS. Modern Montessori met its attendance goal (exceeding 85%) for the fourth year in a row! Roughly 38% of MMCS students qualified for free and/or reduced lunch and about 20% of the student population received Special Education Services.

Student Attrition

MMCS began its fourth school year with 196 students enrolled in September of 2022, which is the same number the school ended with at the close of the 2021-22 school year. After three consecutive years of increased enrollment, MMCS saw consistent, steady enrollment its past year. The 2022-23 school year was the first year since the school's inception that a new grade level and/or class section was not added since the school is approaching maximum capacity. The only expected growth in future years is expected with the addition of 7th grade in the 2023-24 school year and then 8th grade in the 2024-25 school year. The school does not have plans to serve students beyond 8th grade.

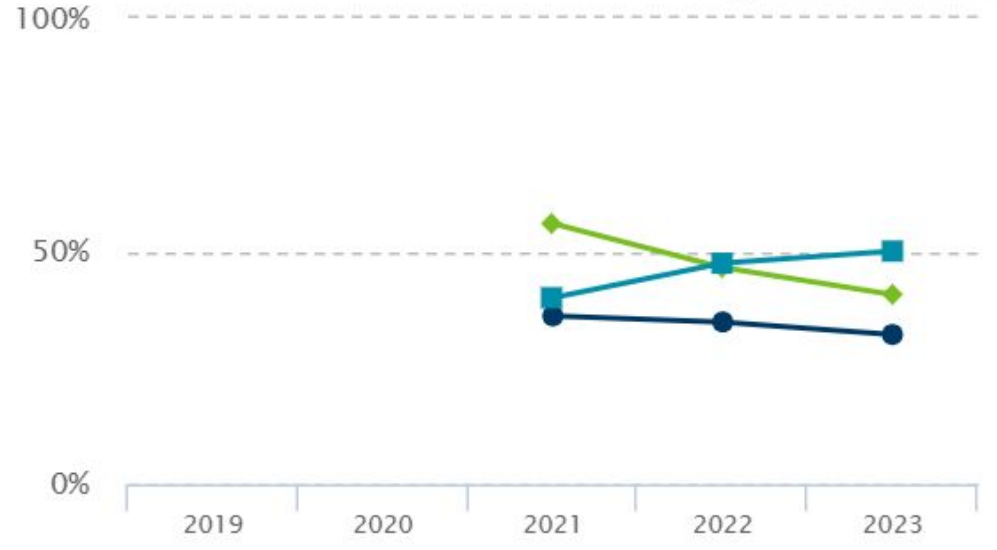
After its open enrollment lottery, Modern Montessori had a waitlist for Preschool, Kindergarten, First, Second, Third and Fourth Grades. Each year MMCS has been open, the wait lists increase with each grade level. On average, MMCS retains about 80% of students from year to year.

Modern Montessori Charter School MCA Test Proficiency Over Time



The number of students meeting standards in math, reading, and science over time

Export to PDF



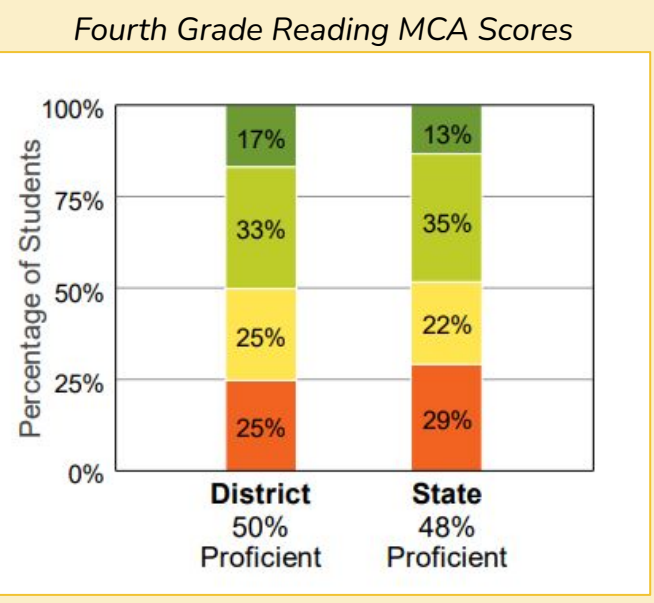
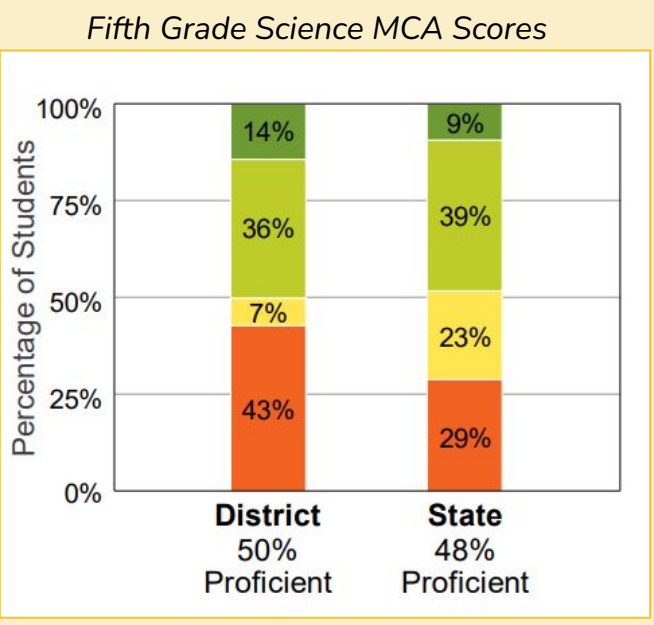
Subject	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Math	N/A (N/A)	N/A (N/A)	36.1% (13)	34.8% (24)	32.1% (26)
Reading	N/A (N/A)	N/A (N/A)	55.9% (19)	46.5% (33)	40.7% (33)
Science	N/A (N/A)	N/A (N/A)	40.0% (4)	47.4% (9)	50.0% (7)

MCA Graph Key

- Exceeds (570 and above)
- Meets (550-569)
- Partially Meets (540-549)
- Does Not Meet (539 and below)

Any segments on the bar graphs without a value have a percentage of 6 or less.

District = MMCS
State = Average of all Districts



Academic Performance

MMCS participated in the Minnesota Department of Education’s Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) for grades 3-6 in Reading and Math. MMCS 5th graders also took the MCA Science test. As a new school, in addition to operating its foundational years during a global pandemic, Modern Montessori only has 3 years of MCA test history. When observing MCA test proficiency over time, MMCS students have decreased by 2.7% in Math and 5.8% in Reading, and increased by 2.6% in Science.

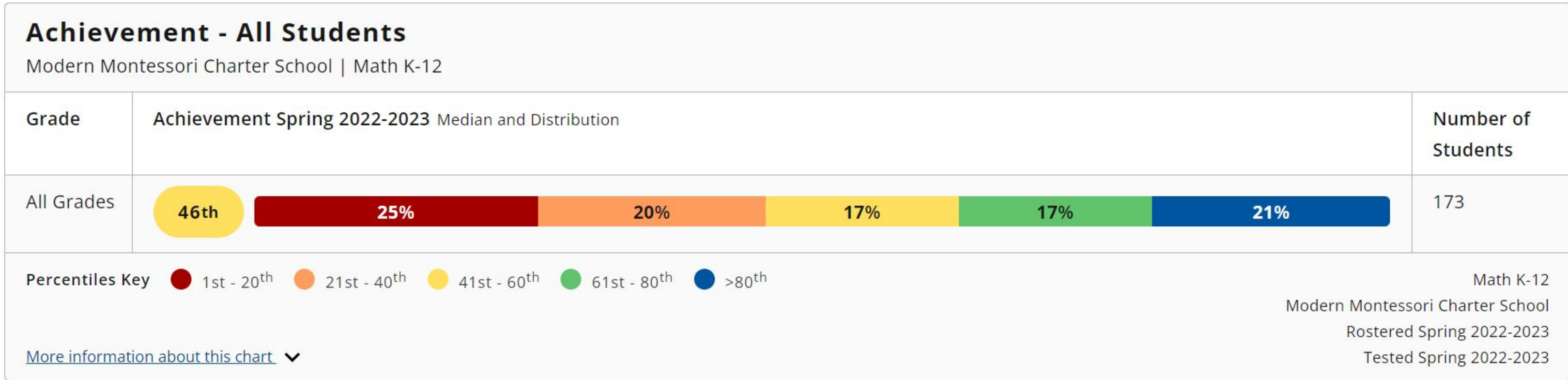
When broken down by grade level and subject matter, some of the MMCS MCA test scores fell below state averages, while others above. It’s important to note that many of our 5th and 6th grade students received instruction in earlier grades at previous schools. MMCS also administered the ACCESS for ELLs test to select students during the 2022-23 school year.

The school switched from FastBridge assessments in English Language Arts and Math to the NWEA MAP testing platform for the 2022-23 school year. These tests were administered to track student progress in the fall, winter and spring of the 2022-2023 school year. End of the year results (graphs on next page) indicate that 38% of students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade were proficient in Math and 35% proficient in Reading. It’s interesting to observe that the MMCS kindergarten class scores were significantly higher at 58% proficient in Reading and 67% proficient in Math. This could be, in part, since their schooling was not interrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic as they were not yet old enough for school.

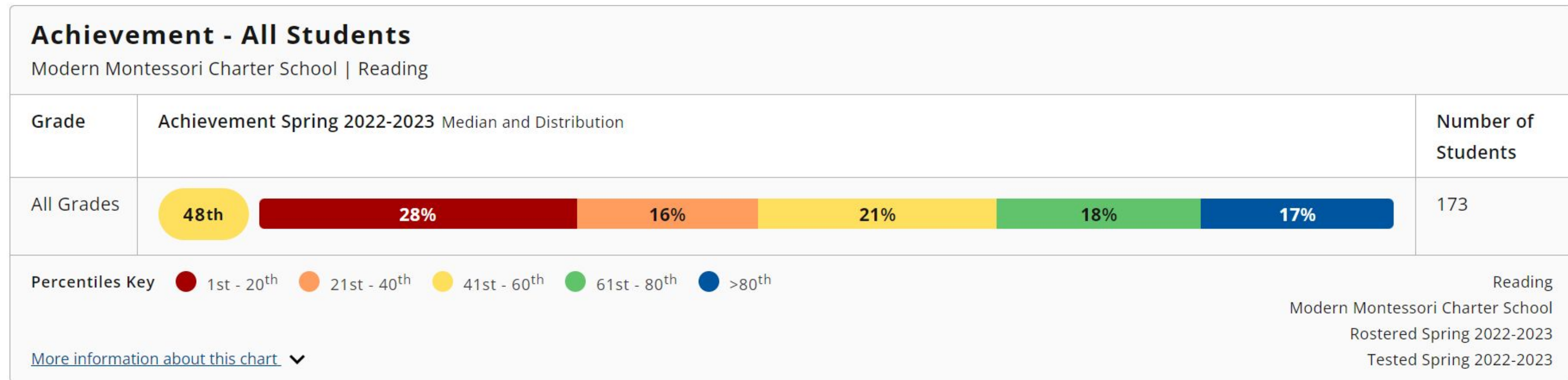
It’s important to note that Montessori classrooms do not rely heavily on tests. Most measurement of student mastery of a concept is exhibited through student work and teacher observation. Therefore, it can be difficult to discern Montessori student test scores, since the testing platform is one students don’t use in classrooms on a daily basis.

NWEA MAP Assessment Summary Results in Reading and Math

Modern Montessori Charter School



Modern Montessori Charter School





Governance and Management

MMCS was governed by a seven-member Board of Directors for the 2022-2023 school year. This was MMCS' fourth year of active operations. After its first board election in the spring of 2022, transitioning from its founding board, the new MMCS Operational School Board members were seated at the July 2022 board meeting. Board meetings were held monthly on the third Wednesday of each month. The school's authorizer is Innovative Quality Schools.

Staffing

The school employed roughly 35 staff during the 2022-23 school year. This consisted of full-time and part-time teachers including 10 grade level teachers, 4 special education teachers, an EL teacher/Interventionist, a STEM teacher, Art teacher and Physical Education teacher. The school had a full-time Operations Manager and Administrative Assistant, a part-time Business Manager and Transportation/Food Service Coordinator and 14 Classroom Assistants or Paraprofessionals in general education and special education ranging from part-time to full-time. The school's technology needs were supported by Technology By Design, a contracted organization.



Finances

MMCS finished its fourth full year of operations with 198 students enrolled and a weighted ADM of 179 students in grades K-6. The majority of the school's funding was based on enrollment as well as some residual COVID relief grant funding. With COVID relief grant funds, the school added a part-time school social worker, intervention teacher and installed new foaming soap dispensers and hand dryers throughout the building.

Modern Montessori's largest expenses were salaries and benefits, building lease and transportation.

MMCS ended the FY22-23 school year with an unaudited fund balance of 4.2%. Modern Montessori received a clean audit for the fourth year in a row. MMCS contracted with Bergen-KDV to help manage the school's finances.

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 seventh operational year.



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.

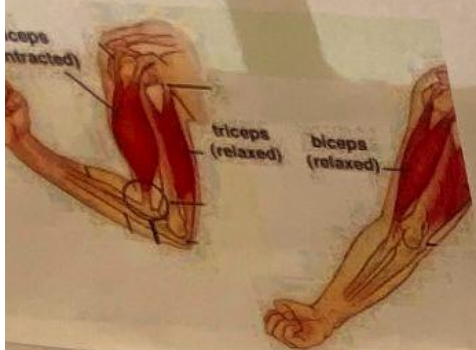
Students will benefit from multiage classrooms where an environment based on respect is at its core. Students will become leaders when given the opportunity to be teachers themselves and assist younger students in the classroom. Younger students will build an intrinsic desire for learning when observing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

MUSCULAR SYSTEM IN THE ARM

Muscles

What lets you move your arms and legs. Did you know that the muscles that move your fingers are also in your arms! How does this work? with tendons of course!



Tendons.
A tendon is like a string that attaches muscle to bone.



How do your fingers move sideways?

There are tendons in your hand that are called flexor tendons, and they help in bending the fingers.



Almost every part of your body is covered in muscle.

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 85-100% three years in a row! 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 school's Middle School program.

As we have reached capacity in our Children's House and Lower Elementary programs, our goal is to have students receive the authentic Montessori 3-year looped teacher experience. We will continue to align Montessori curriculum to state standards to develop a comprehensive scope and sequence.

The school's parent organization, the Funds & Fun Committee, is continuing to seek ways to connect and engage our community through fundraisers and community events.