



*Learning Center*



# Annual Report – 2016/2017

8234 Hwy 70 W  
St. Germain, WI 54558  
715-542-3632  
Tony Duffek, Principal  
Wendy Siekierzynski, Secretary

[www.npsd.k12.wi.us](http://www.npsd.k12.wi.us)

[www.facebook.com/npmc](http://www.facebook.com/npmc)

[twitter@npsdmontessori](https://twitter.com/npsdmontessori)



The Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center opened its doors in the fall of 2015 and recently successfully completed its second school year. The Montessori Learning Center is a public charter school that is part of the Northland Pines School District. The Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center was created by a committee of parents, community members, teachers and administrators. It was created after the success of SOAR middle school and in hopes to provide an alternative learning approach that may fit some students better than the traditional model does.

Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center's (NPMLC) approach to education is rooted in Montessori methodology, which was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator. It is characterized by an emphasis on independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child's natural psychological, physical and social development. The Montessori approach to learning has been time tested, with over 100 years of success in diverse cultures throughout the world. Montessori students learn to be critical thinkers, work collaboratively, and take ownership of their learning. Students are placed in a multiage learning environment in which students have the opportunity to learn from mentors and become leaders. The hands on approach to learning emphasizes teaching students concrete concepts before moving onto abstract ideas and often engages students in their learning through play. Every child essentially has his/her own learning plan that the teacher utilizes to facilitate students' learning journey. This annual report is an attempt to share what the year at NPMLC was like. If you have any questions or comments about this report or NPMLC please feel free to contact Tony Duffek, NPMLC Principal, at [tduffek@npsd.k12.wi.us](mailto:tduffek@npsd.k12.wi.us) or 715-542-3632. The best way to learn more about NPMLC is to come and visit, we welcome you all!

***Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center Mission Statement...***The Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center is dedicated to helping each student reach his/her greatest potential through an individualized learning experience that instills a love for learning so students will move on to be lifelong learners.

**Some of the pillars of Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center:**

- Student-Centered Environment
- Hands on Learning
- Movement and Independence
- Multi-age
- Self-Directed Activity
- Safe and Nurturing Environment
- Teachers as Facilitators of Learning
- Family Engagement
- Environmental Education



**STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

NPMLC opened in the fall of 2015 with 48 students in grades 4K, 5K, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. For the 2016-017 School year it expanded to another classroom, added 4<sup>th</sup> grade and grew to the enrollment of 65 students. Due to a couple of students moving out of the district our numbers went down to 63 by winter. At the time of this publication, we are expecting to open in the fall of 2017 with 68 students and 72 students in the fall of 2018. Currently NPMLC has an established waiting list for most grade levels, totaling over 30 students. The chart below indicates the amount of students in each grade level for the start of the 2016-17 school year.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Males</b>
4K	12	5	7
5K	12	5	7
1	11	5	6
2	12	6	6
3	9	6	3
4	9	1	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>37</b>

One common misconception of charter schools or of Montessori schools is that they are only for advanced students or for “at risk” students. NPMLC has a diverse student population in which an array of student types are successful. We have advanced learners, students with disabilities, and struggling learners just like any school does, and they all are successful in the Montessori setting. This is proof that NPMLC is for all types of students and learners. More specifically, NPMLC has about 12% of the student population with disabilities which is slightly lower than the rest of the district, only 9% that are of minority, and about 15% of the students are of lower socioeconomic status. One of our goals going forward is to diversify the NPMLC student body by getting more students with IEPs and of lower socioeconomic status.

**PROJECTED DEMOGRAPHICS**

We currently have 68 students enrolled for the 2017-18 school year and we anticipate reaching our maximum enrollment and target goal of 72 students by the 2018-19 school year. We do have an established waiting list, which is currently at 33 students, as we accept only 12 students per grade.

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is one measure of academic achievement and often an indicator of students’ desires to come to learn. When NPMLC is compared to the Northland Pines Elementary Schools, NPMLC’s attendance rate is almost the same for the 2016/17 school year. The NPMLC attendance rate was at 94.73% vs. the average of the other 3 elementary schools being 95.35%. Although the attendance rate is slightly lower than the other elementary schools it is still at a desirable level. The more kids are at school the more they will learn so we are pleased to have maintained a good attendance rate for the past two years.

## **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

Charter schools are accountable for taking state and universal assessments just as any other public school does. Therefore, NPMLC's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students took the Wisconsin Forward Exam. A charter school needs to be in existence for at least three years before receiving a DPI issued School Report Card so we do not have this data on the Forward Exam yet but we do administer the AIMSweb and PALS assessments to test basic literacy and math skills just like the rest of NPSD does. We are pleased to report that the majority of our students are reaching grade level benchmarks and are showing academic progress, which will be summarized in this report.

The main academic goal that is stated in the charter contract for math and reading in our second year was to have 80% of our students show progress on math and reading concepts according to AIMSweb Data by the end of the school year.

To measure this progress we administered the AIMSweb universal assessment on all students in various literacy concepts in the Fall, Winter and Spring. Additionally, we administered the PALS assessment in the Spring and Fall for all students in 4K but for the purposes of this report we are reporting AIMSweb data since that aligns with our original charter goals and because the assessments for AIMSweb are nationally normed. The assessment we used to track students' progress was Curriculum Based Measurement or reading fluency (1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> grade) and Letter Sounds (Kindergarten). We used other assessments throughout the year to track student progress but these are our main summative assessments that we utilized to determine whether we met our goal or not.

### **Literacy Academic Data**

**Kindergarten: Letter Sound Fluency** = 100% of students showed progress & 100% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

**1st Grade: CBM (Reading Fluency)** = 100% of students showed progress & 82% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

**2nd Grade: CBM (Reading Fluency)** = 100% showed progress & 75% of students are average or above average based on national norms

**3rd Grade: CBM (Reading Fluency)** = 100% showed progress and 88% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

**4th Grade: CBM (Reading Fluency)** = 100% showed progress and 45% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

Based on this data you can see that all of our students showed progress in all assessed areas therefore we surpassed our goal of having 80% of students show progress. You can also see that the majority of our students are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations based on national norms. More specifically 81% are at Tier I (at or above grade level), 15% at are Tier II (just below grade level), and only 4% are at Tier III (well below average). After analyzing this data we have concluded that we have reached our goal but we still have room to improve and are always making adjustments to our instruction and programming to make this happen.

### **Mathematics Academic Data**

**Kindergarten: - Quantity Discrimination** = 91% of students showed progress & 91% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

- **Oral Counting** = 100% of students showed progress & 73% of students are average or above average based on national norms.
- **Number Identification** = 100% of students showed progress & 64% of students are average or above average based on national norms.
- **Missing Number** = 91% of students showed progress & 91 % of students are average or above average based on national norms.

**1<sup>st</sup> Grade: Math Computation** = 100% of students showed progress & 64% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: Math Concepts and Applications** = 100% showed progress & 58% of students are average or above average based on national norms

- **Math Computation** = 100% showed progress & 50% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade: Math Concepts and Applications** = 100% showed progress and 88% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

- **Math Computation** = 100% showed progress & 63% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade: Math Concepts and Applications** = 89% showed progress and 67% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

- **Math Computation** = 100% showed progress & 67% of students are average or above average based on national norms.

Based on this data you can see that almost all of our students showed progress in all assessed areas, therefore we surpassed our goal of having 80% of students show progress. You can also see that the majority of our students are meeting or exceeding grade level expectations based on national norms. Overall, looking at math computation we have 60% of the students in 1<sup>st</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> grade at Tier I, 23% at Tier II and 17% at Tier III. After analyzing this data we have concluded that we have reached our goal but we still have room to improve.

Even though we have reached the goal that we established in our charter contract and the majority of our students are at grade level benchmarks our students are not scoring as high as we would like and expect. Over the past few years we have found a few contributing factors to why they are not doing as good as we would like. One of the reasons for this is that the traditional Montessori approach does not have many tests, worksheets or timed activities and this is what AIMSweb does. Another factor is that Montessori methodology teaches math facts in a different order than the traditional environment and what AIMSweb tests. For example kids learn to add, then multiply, then subtract and then divide in the Montessori approach. Therefore, students may be tested in subtraction and they have not done much with that concept but they may know addition and multiplication very well. Despite these factors, based on students' workplans, informal assessments, anecdotal evidence, and observed growth throughout the year we are confident that students are learning more and doing better than what is represented in AIMSweb Data. Nonetheless, we expect students to do well on these tests as well, and we will continue to make changes to our programming to make sure our students are being successful and continue to improve.



## **OUTDOOR EDUCATION**

Environmental education is a key ingredient of Montessori education. Students' education is not limited by the four walls of the classroom but their classroom extends into the outdoors as

---

well. Therefore, Montessori students took part in a variety of educational opportunities that took place on and off school grounds. Students went for hikes on the Awassa Trail, raised chicks from eggs, made observations in the school pond, as well as planted vegetables in our school garden. Some of the garden will be harvested by parent volunteers and staff over the summer but most of the food will be harvested in the fall and used to cook in the classroom as part of their practical life lessons. Students also went on field trips to a farm, to the Discovery Center, and the 4<sup>th</sup> graders joined the district 4<sup>th</sup> grade Madison trip. Environmental education and outdoor experiences have provided students a greater appreciation for the outdoors, excites them about their learning, nourishes their creativity and teaches them much valuable science, social and practical life skills.



## **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

Any and every school continually analyzes and changes programming and curriculum to better meet students' needs and to improve student achievement. This is even more so true for a new school. During the summer of 2016 staff worked hard at making some big changes to the curriculum and programming. One of the largest projects was creating a completely different report card that aligns better with the Montessori scope and sequence of learning and with its educational terminology and philosophy. The new report card has been a lot more efficient for teachers and more effective at communicating what students have mastered and learned. Although, we have found some changes will need to be made during the summer of 2017 to make it even more effective and efficient. Other changes include but are not limited to developing better and more detailed work plans, implementing Mystery Science and Next Generation Science Standards, and integrating more direct instruction into the afternoons. These are all positive and big changes for NPMLC but the largest and best improvement we have made to the curriculum is the adoption and implementation of Albanesi curriculum in the E1 and E2 classrooms. Albanesi has provided a scope and sequence in math and literacy for all students in 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> grade. It allows for us to stay true to Montessori methodology and to individualize instruction for each child but gives student learning more structure and accountability and it gives more information to teachers so they can better track students' progress and understanding.

Even though we made many positive changes to programming and curriculum at NPMLC our work isn't done. This summer we plan to continue work in these areas. One thing we plan to develop is a rubric for each standard on the report card. We also plan to develop a more detailed scope and sequence of social studies and science standards so we have a documented plan of what will be taught, when and how. Developing these documents will help us communicate what students are learning to parents but more importantly it will give teachers a more detailed framework of what needs to be taught and when so we can ensure students are learning all the concepts necessary before moving on to 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

One of the core principles of Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center is to create a nurturing learning environment that is an extension of students' homes. To create this sense of family and community within the school NPMLC works hard at involving parents in the school and in their children's education. NPMLC families were involved in the school in various ways. To name just a few of the family evening events, we had family potlucks, Montessori parent education evenings, movie night, a science fair, a family dance, "Peace Night" and Family Learning Team meetings. Families were also invited in during the school days for "breakfast and scrams," observation dates, coffee with the principal, family hikes, gardening, and more. Some of these events included St. Germain Elementary families so students and families could meet children and parents outside of the school as well. The end result of all of the family involvement efforts is having a community of learners that trust and respect each other and in which families trust and respect the school and teachers. There is a true sense of family among NPMLC which makes a rich and joyful learning environment.

## **PARENT SURVEY**

We consistently hear positive feedback from Montessori parents about their experiences with the Montessori education, parent involvement and their satisfactory level with their child's education. Even so, it is important to conduct an annual survey to gather data on parents' perspectives and to gain input from them so we can seek ways to improve our school and meet a family's needs. We received 22 surveys back at the time of this publication. Below are a few highlights and examples of information that we received from the survey.

- 100% of the parents are extremely satisfied or satisfied with NPMLC.
- 86.4% of the parents are extremely satisfied or satisfied with communication home & 9.1% are neutral
- 100% of the students are extremely satisfied or satisfied with NPMLC

### **Comments about what parents like about NPMLC:**

"Independent learning. My child is happy and enjoys school. The real world learning environment. The multi-age education and the practical skills used every day. My child loves going to school! Teaching our children independence and a love of learning. The teachers are exceptional!!!"

"We love NPMLC! The teachers are amazing and the knowledge gained is incredible. Would recommend to anyone!"

"Thank you for EVERYTHING. We are a very happy Montessori Family!"

This is a list of the positive comments. We did seek advice, suggestions and constructive criticism. Although the input from this was limited it is helpful. Some of the things we cannot change, such as the hours of the school day, or expanding to more classrooms, or enrolling all students from the waiting list. Even so, there were other suggestions that we can use such as more communication about academic progress, suggestions to keep certain family nights and ideas about improving report cards. We will take all of their suggestions to help improve programming going forward.

## **FINANCIALS**

NPMLC was one of six schools in Wisconsin that was granted a Wisconsin DPI Charter School Planning Grant in the Fall of 2014 in the amount of \$150,000. The vision and plan of NPMLC would not have been achieved without these funds. These funds were essential as they were used to pay for all of the Montessori materials, furniture and supplies which cost about \$30,000 for each room. The other major expense the grant funds were

used for was to pay for professional development for the NPMLC teachers. Each teacher was required to become Montessori trained and all of them attended courses to receive their Montessori Certification.

There are no longer any state grant funds for NPMLC and the funding for NPMLC is provided by the Northland Pines School District in the same manner that all the other elementary schools are funded. Sharing the building and resources of St. Germain Elementary School makes the charter school sustainable and fiscally responsible. The curriculum, furniture, and supplies that were purchased with grant money are not consumables and will last a long time, which also diminishes costs for the school and makes it sustainable. We did have a one year increase in our budget for the 2016-17 school year because we expanded to another classroom and to having more students. For the 2017-18 school year we will go back to our regular budget provided by the NPSD. With consistent enrollment, an established waiting list and great success, the future for NPMLC is promising.

### **SUMMARY**

We are proud to have accomplished our second successful school year for NPMLC. The Charter Board has flawlessly taken on the duties of managing NPMLC along with the other two Charter Schools. Thanks to the support of this Governance Board and the NPSD School Board, NPMLC has had the autonomy and ability to accomplish its vision and mission. In our second year we expanded to another classroom (E2), increased our enrollment and have built a large waiting list. With current enrollment numbers we project that we will meet our building capacity and goal of 72 students by the 2018-19 school year. From survey results from parents we have a 100% satisfaction rating and numerous notes from families about their level of support and satisfaction for NPMLC. Our data also indicates that our students are academically progressing and that the majority of them are at grade level benchmark or above. With all of this data and information one can gather that it was another successful school year, but there are many other things that contributed to its success.

There were a number of changes to NPMLC programming, curriculum, and school in the second year. For starters, new report cards added efficiency and better communication to parents. New work plans provided more structure and accountability for students. The addition of another classroom and many more students added to the diversity and excitement of the school. Implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards and the Wisconsin Social Studies standards has helped ensure students are learning concepts they need prior to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. And one of the largest changes, the implementation of Albanesi for math and literacy, has greatly increased student learning. The use of Albanesi gives us more data and information on where a child is academically so we can provide a more individualized work plan that targets his/her needs. It provides students structure they need, and it helps teachers' document student learning to ensure they are mastering the necessary concepts. Students are now taking more ownership of their learning and excelling. Albanesi has been a great motivator for students. For example, we have some students in second grade that are now working on 4<sup>th</sup> grade math work. Simultaneously it allows for us to meet the needs of struggling learners as well. For example, a student with a disability can work on math at his/her level and use manipulatives which allows it to make more sense. Even though we have made many changes to the programming (including some that are not listed here) the purchase and integration of Albanesi in to the E1 and E2 classrooms has been one of, if not the most important, change we have made.

You can look at the implementation of Family Learning Teams, Albanesi, new work plans, new report cards, or student data but the best way we can see the success of the school year is by watching each child grow. We see a student that could barely communicate at the beginning of the year that is now socializing and playing with same age peers with no problem. We have a student with a learning disability that could barely read at the start of the year and now reads fluently and loves it. We have students that came from other schools that were bored and now



they are challenged, loving school, and working on concepts two years past their current grade level expectations. These are just a few of the many examples that truly indicate the success of our first two years.

Thanks to great teachers, a supportive St. Germain Elementary School and community, a dedicated Charter School Board, and a supportive NPSD School Board, NPMLC has been able to not only develop but thrive in its first two years. Even though we have a lot to celebrate and this report focuses mainly on the positives NPMLC will always have work to do and seek ways to improve. Some of the projects we are already starting in the summer of 2017 are developing rubrics for the report cards, creating a scope and sequence for ELA, Science and Social Studies, and developing a new mission statement. We are confident that these changes, along with others, will improve student performance and ensure NPMLC continues on a path of success.

### **LIST OF GOVERNANCE BOARD MEMBERS**

Marti von Kluck, President

Jessica Chuckel, Vice President

Beverly Ahlborn, Treasurer

Betty Wright, Secretary

Stephanie Feckett, Member

Sherrill Mayoh, Member

Judith Manzelmann, Member



*Learning Center*