

COMMUNITY MONTESSORI

851 HIGHLANDER POINT DRIVE
FLOYDS KNOBS, IN 47119

2002 – 2003 ENROLLMENT: 75

2003 – 2004 ENROLLMENT: 124

STUDENT RETENTION: 77%

TEACHER RETENTION: 75%

SPECIAL EDUCATION: 27%

Chart D-1

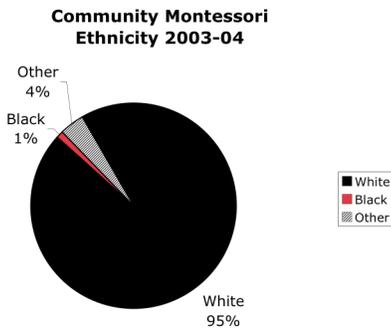
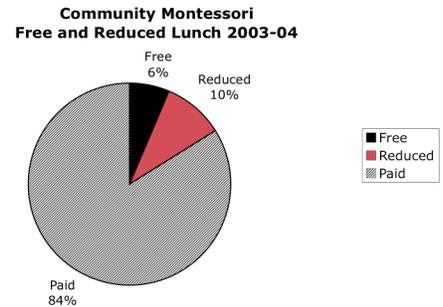


Chart D-2



Community Montessori provides another quality educational choice for its community by encouraging the development of lifelong learning. The school mission is based on the beliefs and theories of Maria Montessori, Constructivism, and Schemata Development. The school uses these beliefs to create an environment where learning happens naturally with an emphasis on learning strengths, developmentally appropriate activities, and individual interests. By the use of many tools, including technology, authentic assessment, and educational manipulatives, each learner is nurtured through the eight constructs: social, emotional, physical, moral, intellectual, aesthetics, creative, and “school success.” This encompasses the total education of the whole learner.

Montessori is a comprehensive educational approach with a focus of knowing each individual learner and partnering in his/her continued growth in connecting knowledge for lifelong learning. Under guidance, children in Community Montessori classrooms learn by making discoveries with the classroom materials and cultivating concentration, motivation, self-discipline, and a love of learning.



QUESTION 1: HAS THE SCHOOL SET THE STAGE FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

■ ACADEMIC WALKTHROUGH

Academic walkthrough team members collected data on student engagement (time on task) and curriculum foci. In addition, team members observed the instructional methods. Global school patterns were compared to Indiana standards, the standards of best practices, and to the unique goals set forth in the school’s charter.

Strengths that were observed across the school by all team members were shared and a reflective question was asked. The purpose of the reflective question was to guide future planning of the school as it engages in continuous school improvement.

MAJOR STRENGTHS OBSERVED

A high level of on-task student behavior was observed. The school exhibits clearly established routines. Music instruction begins at an early age. Students were observed using an extensive vocabulary. Differentiated instruction is based on measured student performance.

REFLECTIVE QUESTION

How should spelling be used in a balanced literacy program, and how should practice words be selected to ensure comprehension? In addition, how can writing and spelling be integrated?

WALKTHROUGH TEAM SUMMARY

Team members rated all observed areas – on-task student behavior, curriculum, and instructional practices – extremely high.

■ BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

Ball State has created a board self-assessment tool to help each school board evaluate its performance and identify areas of strength and areas in need of improvement.

Charter school boards play a significant role in ensuring the school is developing the climate and culture necessary to achieve academic success. Two series of questions from the board self-assessment help demonstrate how young boards are improving. Charts D-3 and D-4 show how Community Montessori’s board evaluates itself in the mission-related aspects of its operation.

SERIES ONE QUESTIONS

Series One questions ask the board to rate itself on three mission-related issues: (1.1) its familiarity with the school’s mission, (1.2) the degree to which its policy decisions reflect that mission, and finally, (1.3) its understanding and agreement of who should be served by the school.

Community Montessori’s board rated itself extremely high on each of these questions, demonstrating a belief that the organization is very mission-focused.

Chart D-3



Chart D-4



SERIES THREE QUESTIONS

Series Three questions ask the board to rate itself on: (3.1) its familiarity with the school’s accountability plan, (3.2) knowledge of programs and services, (3.3) the degree to which it evaluates those services for their consistency with the school’s mission, and finally, (3.4) the degree to which it works with the school leader to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs.

Community Montessori’s board rated itself highly, demonstrating a focus on mission. However, responses show that a relationship is needed between the school’s

mission and the accountability plan.

QUESTION 2: IS THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATIONALLY SOUND?

Charter schools are small, not-for-profit businesses delivering public education. Organizational soundness is essential for short-term success and long-term growth of every charter school. Such organizational strength depends on strong board leadership.

■ BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

SERIES TWO QUESTIONS

Series Two questions ask the board the degree to which it: (2.1) focuses on long-term strategic issues vs. short-term administrative issues, (2.2) has a shared strategic vision for the school, and (2.3) feels that as a board it engages in periodic strategic planning based on sound evidence.

Community Montessori’s board felt it focused on strategic issues, and that its strategic planning is effective and mission-focused.

Chart D-5

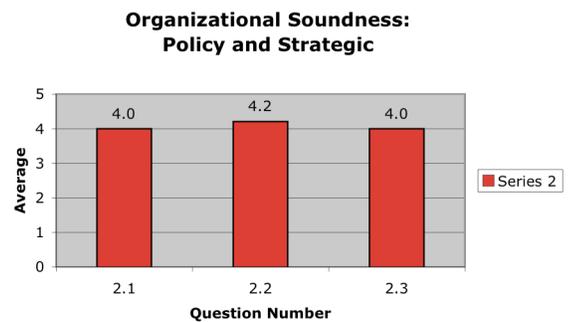


Chart D-6



SERIES SIX QUESTIONS

Series Six questions ask the board to rate itself on the degree to which it has protected the organization against risk by: (6.1) adopting a risk management program, (6.2) purchasing adequate insurance to protect itself from loss, and (6.3) adopting and understanding school emergency procedures.

Community Montessori’s board rated itself well in the area of risk management, but has demonstrated a need to review its risk protection insurance and the school’s emergency procedures.

SERIES SEVEN QUESTIONS

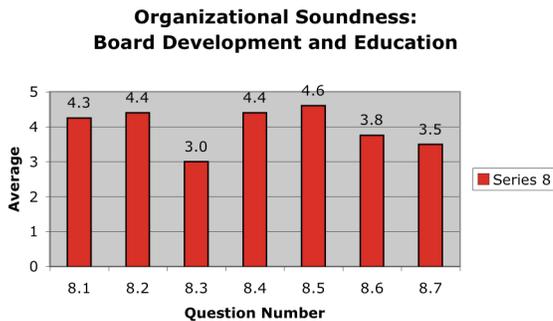
Series Seven questions ask the board to rate its success in developing school leadership by: (7.1) ensuring the school leader directs the organization, (7.2) working with the school leader to ensure the leader receives goal-focused support from the board, (7.3) systematically evaluating the school leader, (7.4) delegating to the school leader the authority and responsibility necessary to successfully manage the school, (7.5) understanding its role in hiring the leader and empowering the leader to build its own staff, and finally, (7.6) developing a depth of leadership that would enable transition of primary leaders if necessary.

Community Montessori’s board rated itself extremely well in all areas other than having developed a necessary depth of leadership that would enable the transition of leaders, if necessary, identifying this as an area where the board should focus.

Chart D-7



Chart D-8



SERIES EIGHT QUESTIONS

Series Eight questions ask the board to rate its own development and education by: (8.1) recruiting board members based on needed expertise, (8.2) holding orientation and education sessions for new members, (8.3) receiving regular education and development related to their roles, (8.4) familiarity with the organization’s by-laws, (8.5) focusing time and energy effectively, (8.6) forging strong internal relationships, and lastly, (8.7) regularly assessing its own performance.

Community Montessori’s board identified the need to receive more regular education and development related to roles, developing stronger internal relationships, and improving the degree to which it assesses its own performance.

SERIES NINE QUESTIONS

Series Nine questions ask the board to evaluate how well it understands its role: (9.1) as a steward of public tax dollars, (9.2) as the entity accountable for meeting student achievement requirements, (9.3) in complying with its charter contract, (9.4) in developing the school and getting it up and running, and (9.5) in transitioning to a policy making and governing body.

Community Montessori’s board rated itself well in all areas other than transitioning to a policy making body. This should be an area of focus for the board.

Chart D-9



QUESTION 3: IS THE SCHOOL FINANCIALLY VIABLE?

With limited funds and high start-up costs, the first few years of a charter school’s existence are critical. Establishment of strong accounting and financial management practices is essential to success.

Ball State University’s Office of the Vice President for Business Affairs conducts a detailed review of each charter school’s budget performance, financial status, and future projections. In addition, the university reviews each school’s State Board of Accounts Audit and monitors changes and improvements recommended in these reports.

Comments are shared with schools and an historical database is under development to track performance and trends. Finally, the board self-assessment asked the board to rate its existing financial controls and long-term financial planning.

■ FINANCIAL REPORTS AND COMMENTS FROM BSU

Community Montessori’s balance sheet, while not traditional in format, reports positive fund balances. The school, beginning an ambitious construction project, has demonstrated it is in a solid financial position.

Community Montessori’s ability to secure credit enhancement to assist with the construction project as well as tax-exempt financing demonstrates pro-active financing plans as well as a solid financial position.

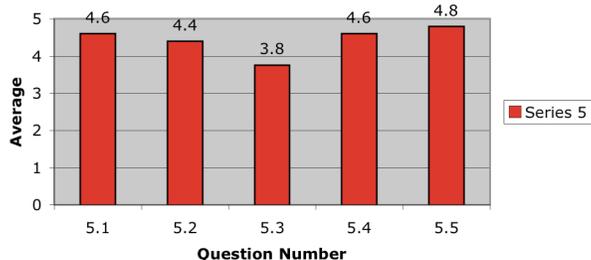
■ Summary of SBOA Audit Results

The State Board of Accounts Audit Report, covering the period from July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2003, identified several minor deficiencies. Most, but not all, were addressed in the school’s official response.

■ BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

Chart D-10

**Financial Viability:
Budget Development and Management**



SERIES FIVE QUESTIONS

Series Five questions ask the board to rate itself on the school’s financial management focusing on: (5.1) its understanding of the budget and making strategic financial decisions, (5.2) timeliness, accuracy, and clarity of financial reports made to the board, (5.3) soundness of the organization’s financial policies, (5.4) its fund development strategy, and (5.5) its understanding of financial needs related to planned growth.

Community Montessori’s board rated itself highly related to financial stewardship and viability, identifying soundness of its financial policies as an area that the organization should review.

QUESTION 4: HOW IS THE SCHOOL PERFORMING AGAINST SUCCESS MEASURES?

Ultimately, charter schools are evaluated by their academic success. Ball State evaluates how each charter school is performing against success measures, including AYP as defined by No Child Left Behind and Public Law 221 provisions as defined by Indiana Department of Education.

All charter schools sponsored by the university are required to administer a standardized test twice per year to demonstrate academic growth. Each school develops specific goals and measures in the form of an accountability plan. Finally, the board self-assessment questions focus on the board's, and the organization's, effectiveness in defining and communicating the school's purpose and success in achieving its mission.

■ ISTEP RESULTS

Chart D-11

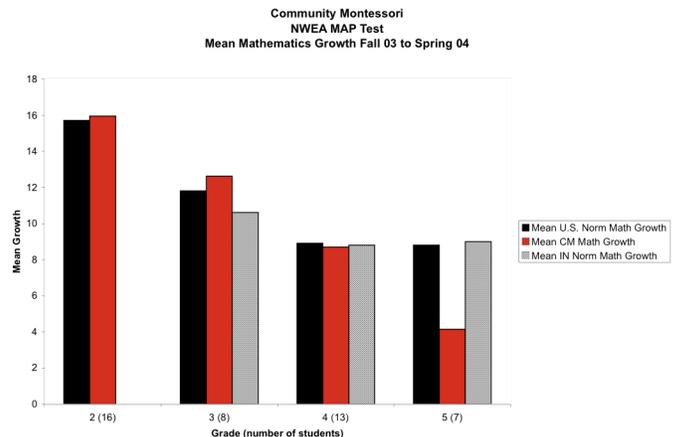
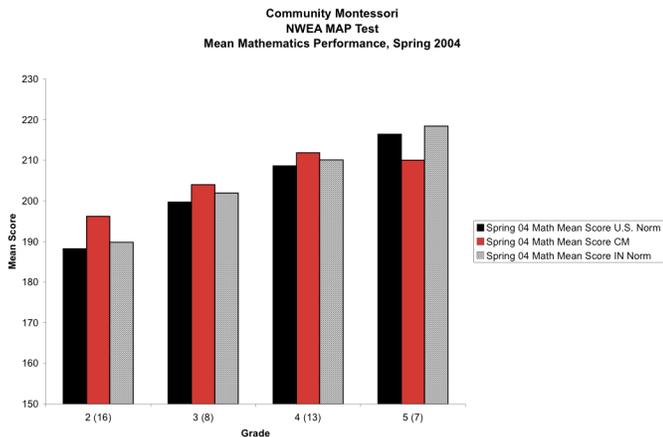
Community Montessori									
	% Passing Both			% Passing Math			% Passing English		
	Community Montessori	Floyd County	Indiana	Community Montessori	Floyd County	Indiana	Community Montessori	Floyd County	Indiana
3rd									
2002	73%	64%	59%	82%	72%	67%	82%	74%	72%
2003	55%	62%	63%	55%	71%	71%	82%	72%	74%

■ NWEA RESULTS

MATH RESULTS

Chart D-12

Chart D-13



Second, third, and fourth graders grew at the same rate or slightly above national and Indiana norms. These same grades scored above national and Indiana norms in the spring. Fifth graders grew at a rate slightly less than national and Indiana norms and scored below national and Indiana norms in the spring.

READING RESULTS

Chart D-14

Community Montessori
NWEA MAP Test
Mean Reading Performance, Spring 2004

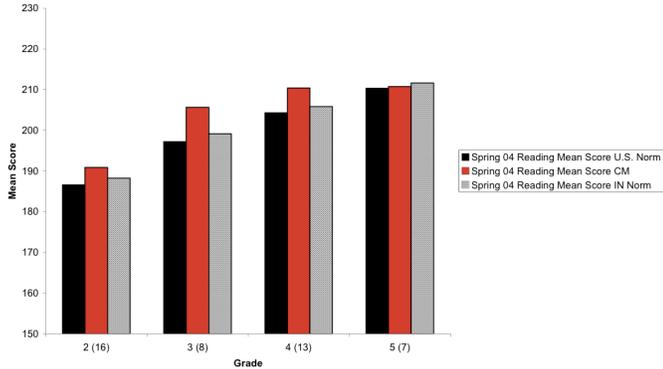
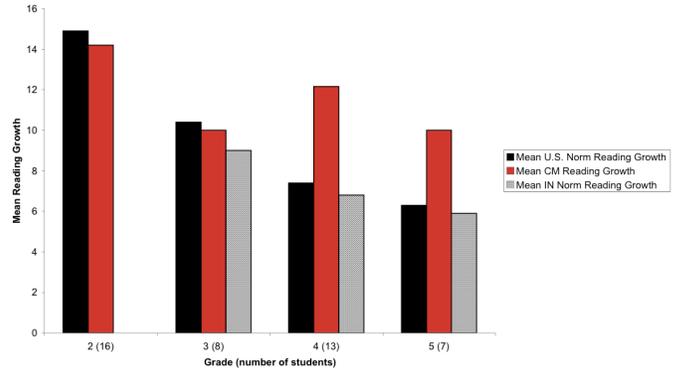


Chart D-15

Community Montessori
NWEA MAP Test
Mean Reading Growth Fall 03 to Spring



Second and third graders grew at a rate consistent with national and Indiana norms. Fourth and fifth graders grew at a rate well above these norm groups.

Second, third, and fourth graders scored above national and Indiana norms in the spring, while fifth graders scored nearly equal to national and Indiana norms.

LANGUAGE ARTS RESULTS

Chart D-16

Community Montessori
NWEA MAP Test
Mean Language Performance, Spring 2004

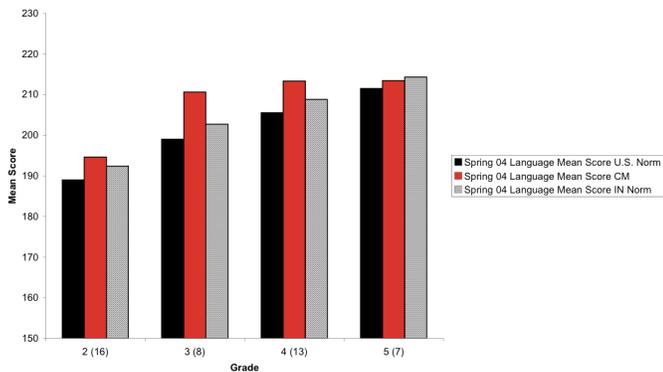
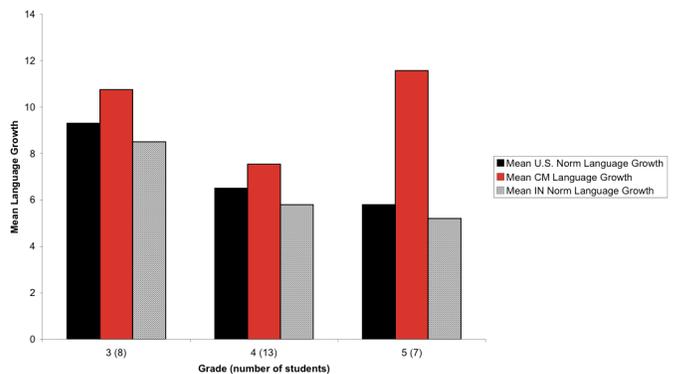


Chart D-17

Community Montessori
NWEA MAP Test
Mean Language Growth Fall 03 to Spring



Third, fourth, and fifth graders grew at a rate greater than national and Indiana norms.

Second, third, and fourth graders scored above national and Indiana norms in the spring, while fifth graders scored nearly equal to national and Indiana norms.

GROWTH

Chart D-18

Percent of Community Montessori Students Meeting or Exceeding Norm Mean Growth:
Fall 2003 to Spring 2004

Grade (number of students)	Reading	Math	Language
2 (16)	50%	38%	*
3 (8)	63%	38%	63%
4 (13)	54%	62%	69%
5 (7)	57%	29%	100%
Aggregate Average	55%	43%	75%

* Language Arts results not applicable to grade 2.

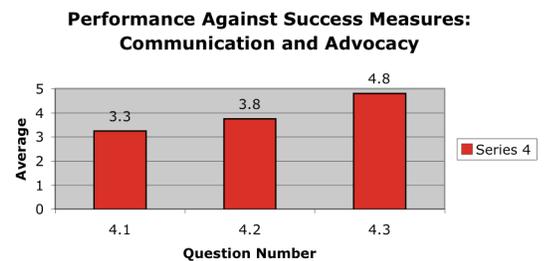
Chart D-18 shows the percentage of students by grade and subject that met or exceeded national and Indiana norm growth.

■ BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

SERIES FOUR QUESTIONS

Series Four questions ask the board to rate itself on its communication and advocacy on behalf of the school focusing on: (4.1) development of a plan for communicating the school’s purpose to the community, (4.2) ability of individual board members to communicate the school’s mission and programs to the community, and (4.3) the degree to which individual members and the board as a whole are advocates for their students’ education.

Chart D-19



Community Montessori’s board, consistent with earlier mission-related questions, rated itself highly as an advocate for its students’ education. The board identified a need to improve its plan for communicating the school’s purpose to the community as well as individual board members’ ability to communicate mission and programs in the community.