

Downtown Montessori Academy

ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

Our Mission

Our mission at Downtown Montessori Academy is to create a Montessori environment where your child's early experiences with learning will help him or her to become a self-confident, competent, cooperative adult. The competence the child attains is directly related to their engagement in the meaningful work of the Montessori classroom. We seek to provide a family-centered environment that enriches and nurtures the growth of the family and the child.



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President’s Letter

This past year our Downtown Montessori community experienced incredible events that very few could have predicted. We adapted to challenges that fundamentally affect how our community functions. Remote learning took place, and the individualized attention DMA provided to families was quickly identified as the strength of our education. The Board, administration, teachers, staff, and parents invested time, energy, and resources on refining methodologies, preparing for meetings, providing instruction, and communicating in ways that have never been done before.

**“An education capable of saving humanity is no small undertaking; it involves the spiritual development of man, the enhancement of his value as an individual, and the preparation of young people to understand the times in which they live.”
— Maria Montessori**

During this time, we embraced Maria Montessori’s philosophy that “The World is our Classroom” as guides implemented items from our inside and outdoor home environments to continue embracing each child’s natural love of learning and curiosity. It was amazing to see our students engage enthusiastically as they shared their lessons via Zoom and Facebook. Now we are embarking on our 40th year!

The Board and Head of School have worked diligently to prepare a very comprehensive plan to ensure the health and well-being of our DMA family. We appreciate all of you as we wait for the proper time to reopen each stage of this plan. We appreciate your patience and cooperation. We are excited to be launching our Annual Fund campaign for this year. We are asking each of you to show your love for DM by making a donation to the Annual Fund. Your gift is an investment in every student, guide and classroom at our school.

We are proud of all we have accomplished and excited about what lies ahead. We invite all of our families, friends, grandparents, and alumni to make a personal contribution to the important work of cultivating life-long learners. Hillside students thrive in our authentic Montessori environments where joy, self-discovery, collaboration, and curiosity live!

Gifts to the Annual Fund provide:

- New materials for our classrooms
- New addition of the adolescents building
- Professional development for our staff
- Tuition assistance for our students

Your support will make an immediate difference in the lives of our students every day. On behalf of our board, I’d like to thank the entire Hillside Montessori community for all you do.

With Gratitude,

Michael Moore
President, DMA Board of Directors

A Letter From the Head of School

Dear DMA Community,

Inspired by the growth in recent years at DMA, I am honored to work alongside talented teachers and staff, collaborate with a generous parent community, and feel support from committed Board members. At DMA, we uphold a strong mission and have much to be thankful for. I welcome you to gather and reflect on this as well as the rapid growth and milestones we have experienced in recent years. Furthermore, I invite you to experience the pride in supporting the future at DMA as we continue to thrive and carry forth our important mission.

“Providing children with an educational program rooted in Dr. Maria Montessori’s philosophy that nurtures a love of learning and fosters respect for self, others and the environment.”

During my time as Acting and Interim Head of School, I have recognized the “big work” in embracing this transformative period as an opportunity to continue thriving as a vibrant institution in our community. In partnership with the DMA Board, the past months have been devoted to understanding the financial position, operations, culture, and need for enhancing program sustainability at DMA. My daily focus has been on

supporting and growing with the team of teachers and staff at DMA while immersing myself in understanding the operations to promote efficiencies. I aspire to protect the value of our programs and to support opportunities that enhance the student experience and promote the uniqueness of DMA. Beyond the philosophy, your students and your family’s commitment to DMA is what fuels my passion for serving our school.

Dr. Maria Montessori inspires us to appreciate the patterns and challenges that children experience when mastering new endeavors. She embraces challenges as a natural part of the growing process; as opportunities to cultivate a love of learning and thereby facilitate growth and development. Watching DMA navigate through the introduction of new programs, projects, and opportunities reminds me of the parallels we see while watching our children grow and experience new opportunities. Through this development there is an inevitable challenge.

The Annual Meeting is an exciting opportunity to promote transparency regarding challenges and opportunities, and invite collaboration which we know can lead to success. Looking at our beautiful school, seeing the dedication by our team of educators, and realizing the impact that DMA has on the lives of our children is a common ground from which we are all deeply rooted. Recent evidence of our devoted community can be seen from the progress made on the new addition for the adolescence building. These recent milestones serve to remind us of the strength we have as a community and the hope we share for the future at DMA. We are thankful for your continued support and dedication to KMS and look forward to cultivating impactful opportunities to keep our school thriving!

Best Regards,

Virginia Flynn
Head of School

A Letter From the Executive Director

Dear Downtown Montessori Academy Community,

In the words of Maria Montessori, “Growth is not merely a harmonious increase in size, but a transformation.” The past two years have been a time of tremendous growth and change at Downtown Montessori Academy (DMA). We are entering our thirteenth year at the Bay View location and beginning the construction process to expand our building.

We are also entering a new phase of transformation – a time for strengthening our community, refocusing on our Montessori mission, and remembering the love of learning that brings us all together at this special school. DMA remains dedicated to providing a high-quality independent Montessori education to students in Bay View in both our Primary and Elementary Programs.

This Annual Report, summarizes our milestones and financials for the 2022-23 fiscal year, which ended August 31, 2023. This Annual Report as the beginning of an ongoing conversation about crafting a vibrant future for DMA. We have much to celebrate about this past year, and many exciting initiatives on the horizon. The Annual Report is an opportunity to share with our community both our strengths and our opportunities for improvement.

Our strengths may already be evident to you, as your children are learning from dedicated teachers, developing lifelong friendships, and blossoming both academically and socially. This report will underscore these strengths, but also shed light on areas that the Board is working to address. The financial data reported here is based on preliminary data, pending our annual audit. As you will see, our recent period of physical growth has increased our operating costs, and we have not yet grown our fundraising or enrollment efforts to follow suit. The new Board of Directors and Head of School are working diligently to execute prudent financial management, increase enrollment, promote community-building, enhance communication, and diversify our fundraising efforts. In the year ahead, we will continue to provide high-quality academic and enrichment opportunities while closely monitoring expenses.

We hope that you will join us in celebrating our amazing teachers and students and commit to working together to build and strengthen our community. Without the engagement and support of our families, DMA could not do all that it does.

Sincerely,

Ian Spanic
Executive Director

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The Downtown Montessori Academy Board of Directors provides strategic leadership in support of the school's mission, philosophy and goals. The Board makes long-term decisions, provides financial management and communicates regularly with the Executive Director, Ian Spanic, the Head of School, Virginia Flynn, and Assistant Head of School, Amy Goodenough, to ensure that the school's program and operation are faithful to the terms of its charter, and that the school is a viable organization.

As the administrative team manages the day-to-day activities, the Board's mission is to preserve and protect the financial health and well-being of the school, as well as working with the school's administration to determine annual goals and objectives. The Board develops the long-term strategic plan that sets the annual agenda for the board and determines the annual goals and objectives for the Executive Director and Head of School.

Board of Directors

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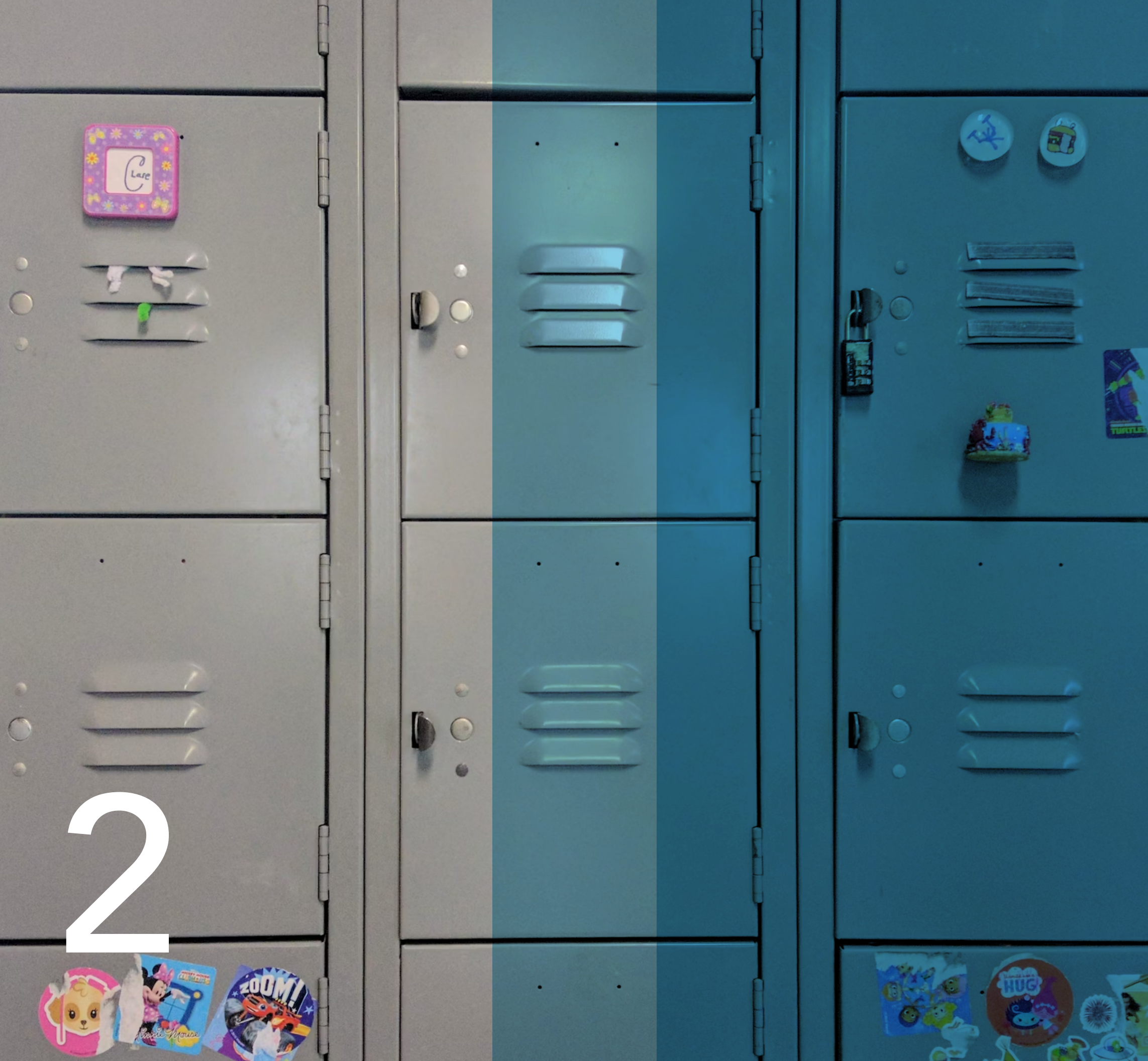
Michael Moore

Michael Moore is the President of the Board of Directors at DMA and has extensive business operations and legal experience. He spent 13 years on a public school board in Fox Point, where he was President, Treasurer and chaired the Personnel Committee. He is the president and founder of Moore's Law, as a professional coach who specializes in helping lawyers and law firms.

Travis Rhoades

Travis Rhoades is the Vice President of the Board of Directors. He is an attorney and shareholder at Crivello Carlson, S.C., where he focuses on litigation. He is the proud father of four children.

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Heather Heaviland

Heather Heaviland is the former Director of Real Estate Services for Wisconsin for IFF. Heather works with nonprofit agencies, primarily schools, plan and execute real estate development projects. She has expertise in government programs, finance and strategic planning.

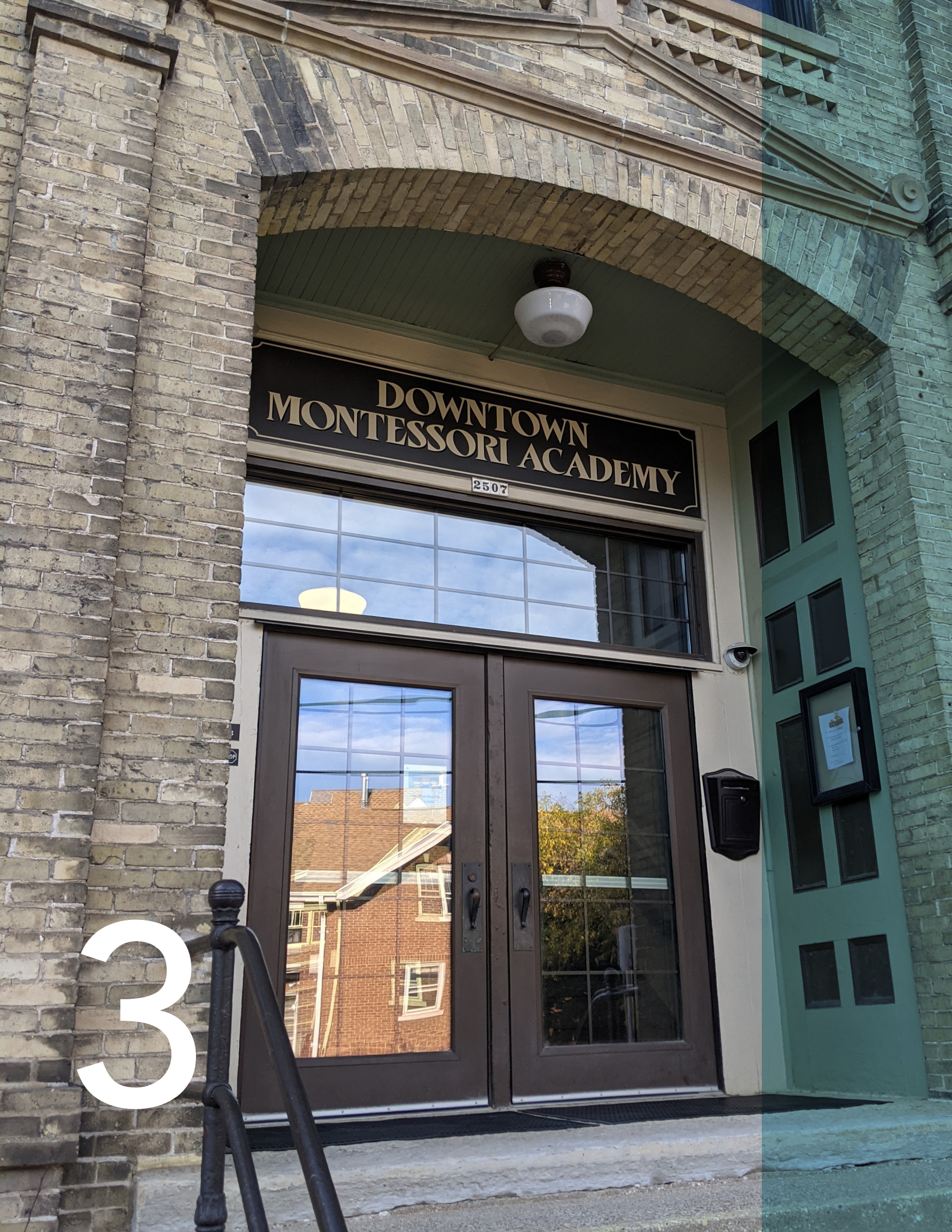
Michelle Hake

Michelle Hake serves as Treasurer of the Board of Directors and is a management professional with over 10 years of experience in both Big Four public accounting and commercial industry.

Howard Austin

Howard Austin serves as a Director and has a background in academic leadership and human relations, having worked as a professor at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) for more than 35 years.

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To meet the needs of our planned growth DMA completed the purchase and began the construction and renovation of the former church and adjacent property to provide more space for classrooms, a large gathering area, gymnasium and a cafeteria. This reflects our commitment to the students and their needs. It is designed to meet the social, academic and emotional needs of our students.

Our adolescents are in the process of defining themselves and need a learning environment that can provide opportunities to use their personal abilities to benefit themselves and others. The entire second floor of the building, will be used as a gymnasium but also as a multi-use room for small or large group meetings. The first floor will be our much-anticipated cafeteria that will cater to a healthy menu and provide a social backdrop for our students.

Our Facility

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Our Facility

Some Highlights of Our New Building

- Student Lounge with surround sound and three LED monitors
- Dedicated kitchen in the cafeteria to support new kitchen staff
- State of the art lighting and energy efficient windows throughout the building
- Wheelchair-accessible ramp installed at two entrances
- Entire building equipped with wireless and CAT 6 capabilities
- Fully updated security and door access systems
- Fire protection on all floors as well as basement sprinkler system

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At Downtown Montessori Academy, we believe that children learn best when they are at ease and comfortable. The key is to see the hidden nature of the child at given stages of development and to design an environment that will fulfill the child's innate potential.

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The educational approach is for children to trust in their own ability, to think and to solve problems independently. The goal is to lead students to think for themselves and become actively engaged in the learning process.

Like the rest of us, children learn through trial, error and discovery. The students learn not to be afraid of making mistakes. They learn to try and try again without fear of embarrassment. As we allow students to develop a meaningful degree of independence and self-discipline, we also set a pattern for a lifetime of good work habits and a sense of responsibility. Our Montessori students are taught pride in their work.

Our Program



Our Teachers

All instructional staff have Montessori certification as well as Department of Public Instruction License and actively participate in continuing education and training opportunities in order to maintain the high standards set by Downtown Montessori Academy.

No teachers or instructional staff left the school's employment during the school year, for a retention rate of 100%. Two of the classroom teachers have taught at the school since its original charter 16 years ago. The average experience for classroom teachers at Downtown Montessori for classroom teachers is 7.8 years.

Maribel Sambolin - Toddlers
 Javon Shepard - Children's House
 Kim Fowler - Children's House
 Sasa Sokolovic - Children's House
 Claire Riordan - Lower Elementary
 Hanna Fowler - Lower Elementary
 Kelsey McCarron - Lower Elementary
 McNeal Stepien - Lower Elementary
 Sara Vondrachek - Lower Elementary
 Ashley Petry - Upper Elementary
 Sean Jackson - Upper Elementary
 Taylor Wind - Upper Elementary
 Justina Lawrence - Adolescent
 Kendall Cook - Adolescent
 Jenny Urbanek - Art
 Will Branch - Music
 Bridget Quast - Occupational Therapist
 Barb Rankin - Reading Specialist
 Kathy Masch - School Social Worker
 Beverly Luckenbill - Special
 Education Director
 Kate Teipel - Speech & Language
 Dr. Suzanne Terry - Writing Specialist



Our Students

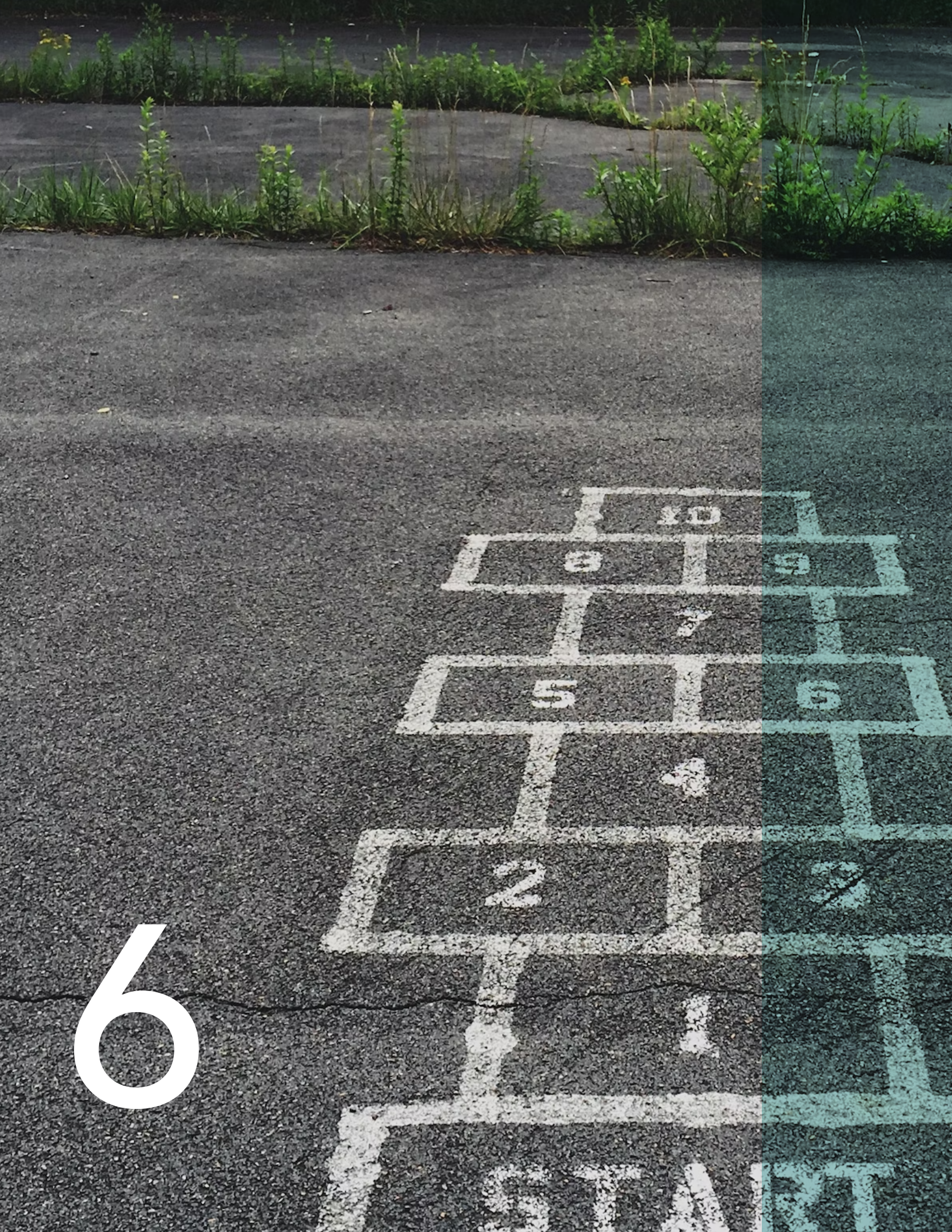
Downtown Montessori started the school year with 299 students in K3 through eighth grade. By the end of the year, two more students had enrolled, and seven had withdrawn. To protect student identity, CRC does not include results for groups of fewer than ten students; there were too few withdrawals this year to provide reasons. Of the students who began the year, 292 (97.7%) finished the school year at Downtown Montessori.

Enrollment by Student Grade Levels, 2022-2023

K3	21 (7.1%)
K4	41 (13.9%)
K5	39 (13.3%)
1st	31 (10.5%)
2nd	36 (12.2%)
3rd	33 (11.2%)
4th	26 (8.8%)
5th	24 (8.2%)
6th	16 (5.4%)
7th	20 (6.8%)
8th	7 (2.4%)

Beginning in 2012-2013, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction(DPI) applied more rigorous proficiency-level cut scores to the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) reading and math tests. These revised cut scores are based on standards set by the National Assessment of Educational Progress and require students to achieve higher scale scores in order to be considered proficient,

Downtown Montessori Academy administered all required standardized tests noted in their contract with the City of Milwaukee. Of the 122 fourth through eighth graders who were proficient or advanced in 20XX-20XX, 95.1% maintained proficiency in reading and 91.8% maintained proficiency in math, exceeding the CSRC goal of 75%.

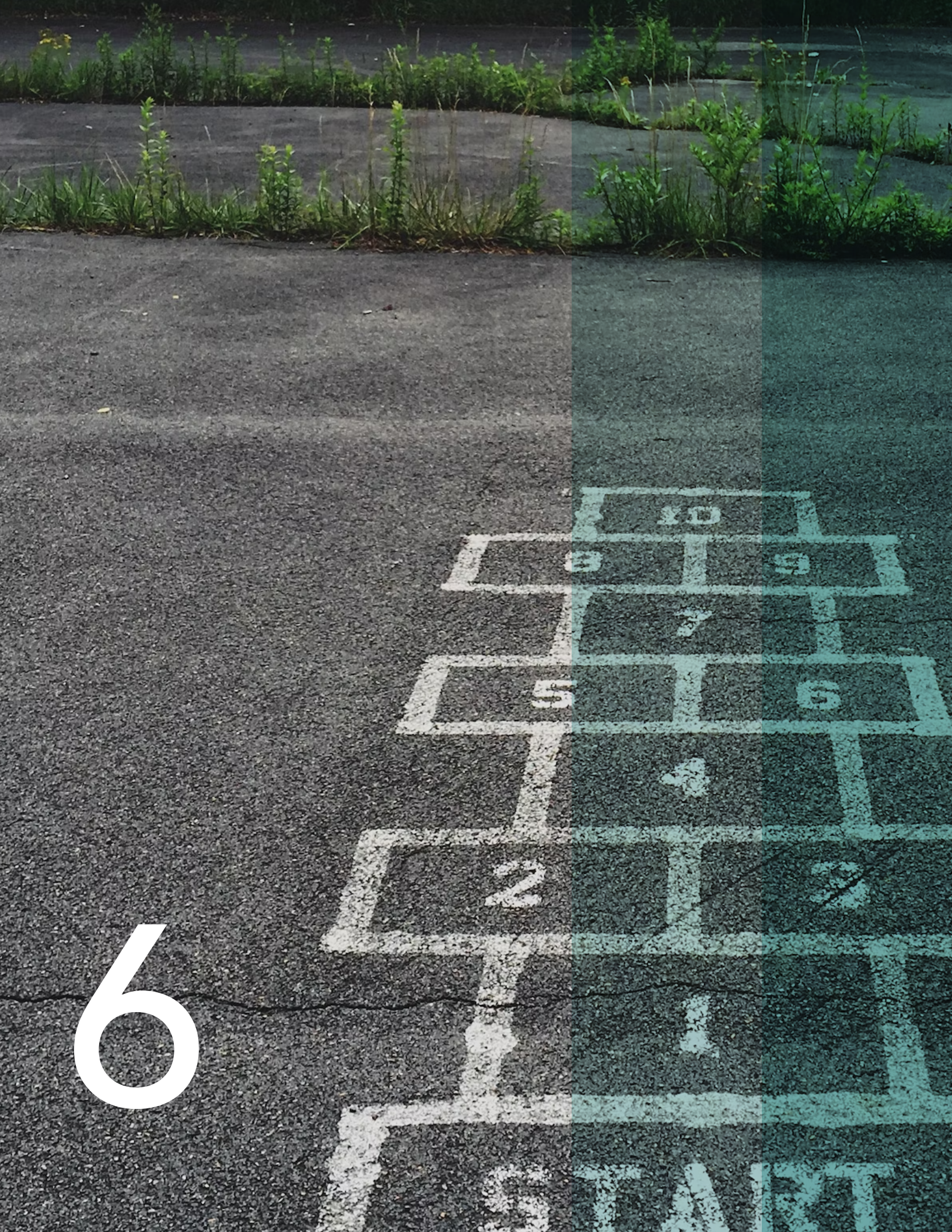


2022-2023 Report Card Summary

Overall score 81.8% - Exceeds Expectations (4 out of 5 stars)

RACE/ ETHNICITY	
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.1%
Asian	4.2%
Black or African American	7.0%
Hispanic/Latino	15.1%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1.1%
White	70.5%
Two or More Races	1.1%

STUDENT GROUPS	
Students with Disabilities	4.6%
Economically Disadvantaged	15.4%
English Learners	0.0%



	DMA SCORE	K-8 STATE
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	76.2	63.9
SCHOOL GROWTH	87.9	66.0
CLOSING GAPS	76.0	69.9
ON-TRACK & POSTSECONDARY READINESS	93.3	86.6

PRIORITY AREA WEIGHTS	
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT	38.1%
SCHOOL GROWTH	11.9%
CLOSING GAPS	25.0%
ON-TRACK & POSTSECONDARY READINESS	25.0%

Congratulations to our 2023 Graduates!

*Downtown Montessori is very proud to introduce
our graduating class of 2023!*

AIDA BUGG

DEE END

COLIN SIK

DAVE ALLIPPA

EILEEN SIDEWAYS

FRAN G. PANI

GINGER PLANT

HOPE FURALETTER

KAREN ONNABIT

LYNNE GWISITIC

MIKE ROWE-SOFT

PETER OWT

REEVE EWER

All 8th graders graduated. They will be attending University School of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee High School of the Arts, South Milwaukee High School, Oak Creek High School, Rufus King High School and Milwaukee Montessori High School.

At this time, Downtown Montessori Academy does not have a formal method to track the high school and college achievement of its graduates. Informally, however through contact with families the school administration has learned that all of its 2015 and 2016 alumni have graduated high school and are attending colleges, including Alverno College, MSOE, UW-Milwaukee and Milwaukee Area Technical College. All of the 2017 alumni are attending high school, including Rufus King, Pius XI, Eastbrook Academy, Wisconsin Career Academy, the Alliance School and the Montessori IB. High School. The 2018 graduates is attending, Rufus King, the Milwaukee High School of the Arts Shorewood and Reagan IB. All Students who have graduated from Downtown Montessori Academy since the inception in 2009 have attended the high school of their choice.

Giving

The engagement and generosity of the overall community is critically important to the success of any non-profit organization. The support of the Downtown Montessori Academy's families and partner organizations allow us to enhance our program beyond our per-student public funding - going beyond basic educational needs to enrich the overall environment for our students.

The continued support of our families and partner organizations is essential to our success as a school. This year, Downtown Montessori Academy received \$49,901 in total fundraising, excluding grants.

Annual Auction

Downtown Montessori Academy's largest fundraiser is our Annual Auction, held every year in May. The 2020 Auction Raised \$32,089!

So much goes into the success of the Auction, from the tireless work of parent volunteers to the generous contribution of items from families and businesses around the community, to the attendees who bid and purchase these high-quality items and experiences.

All funds raised will be used for future redevelopment of the new construction. While a significant amount of money was raised for this endeavor, it is not enough to cover the cost of such a big project. Proceeds from this auction and the 2019 fundraising will be combined to fund the project. Plans are underway and will be shared with the staff, parents and students as they are developed.

This couldn't have been accomplished without the direct support of you - the families, friends and community supporters of Downtown Montessori Academy. For your continued support we are eternally grateful.

Many thanks to all donors and volunteers who continue to make the success of Downtown Montessori Academy possible!

Finances

The board of directors and school administration are pleased to report that Downtown Montessori Academy has had another successful year. We have continued to balance the school’s budget on an annual basis. All of our financial requirements have been met and policies and procedures are in place including an annual third-party audit, to ensure the highest standards of financial oversight.

Financial Statement Year ending June 20, 2023

INCOME 2022-2023	
Education Fees	\$1,616,775
Day Care	\$280,523
Contributions	\$60,526
Other Income	\$24,624
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,982,448

EXPENSES 2022-2023

Program	\$1,941,445
Management	\$495,288
Contributions	\$33,141
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,469,874

NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	Undesignated	1,572,226
	Board Designated	165,481
With Donor Restrictions		
TOTAL NET ASSETS		1,740,958

“The child can develop fully by means of
experience in his environment. We call
such experiences ‘work’.”
Maria Montessori



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