

2015-2016 World's Best Workforce Report Summary

District or Charter Name: Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School

Grades Served: K-6

Contact Person Name and Position: Liesl Taylor, Head of School

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.11, a school board, at a public meeting, shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term strategic plan to support and improve teaching and learning that is aligned with creating the world's best workforce. The school board must publish an annual report on the previous year's plan and hold an annual public meeting to review goals, outcomes and strategies. An electronic *summary* of the annual report must be sent to the Commissioner of Education each fall.

This document serves as the required template for submission of the 2015-2016 report summary.

Districts must submit this completed template by **December 15, 2016**, to:

MDE.WorldsBestWorkForce@state.mn.us.

1. Stakeholder Engagement

1a. Annual Report

[Note: For each school year, the school board must publish a report in the local newspaper, by mail or by electronic means on the district website.]

- *Provide the direct website link to the district's WBWF annual report. If a link is not available, describe how the district disseminates the report to stakeholders.*

<http://cornerstone-elementary.org/board/reports/>

1b. Annual Public Meeting

[Note: School boards are to hold an annual public meeting to communicate plans for the upcoming school year based on a review of goals, outcomes and strategies from the previous year. Stakeholders should be meaningfully involved, and this meeting is to occur separately from a regularly scheduled school board meeting. The author's intent was to have a separate meeting just for this reason.]

**CORNERSTONE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – ANNUAL MEETING
TUESDAY MAY 17, 2016 – 5:30 P.M.**

Board Members Present: Liz Coenen, Andrea Galdames, Juliann McDermott, Jane Reilly, Melissa Santrach, and Liesl Taylor

Board Members Absent: Kristen Campbell, Eve Lo, and Julie Richards

Other Attendees: Chris Bewell and Amanda Cina

Meeting Called to Order by Liz Coenen, Board Chair, at 5:45 pm



1c. District Advisory Committee

[Note: The district advisory committee must reflect the diversity of the district and its school sites. It must include teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community residents. Parents and other community residents are to comprise at least two-thirds of advisory committee members, when possible. The district advisory committee makes recommendations to the school board.]

- *Describe the makeup and list the District Advisory Committee members for the 2015-2016 school year. When describing the makeup of the committee, ensure roles are clear (teachers, parents, support staff, students, and other community residents).*

Liesl Taylor, Head of School
Amber Osterkamp, Elementary Teacher
Megan Riemer, Literacy Specialist
Chris Bewell, Program Administrator
Jess Goff, Parent
Lourdes Harris, Community Member

2. Goals and Results

[Note: SMART goals are: specific and strategic, measurable, attainable (yet rigorous), results-based and time-based. Goals should be linked to needs and written in SMART-goal format. Results should tie directly back to the established goal so it is clear whether the goal was met. Districts may choose to use the data profiles provided by MDE in reporting goals and results or other locally-determined measures. Be sure to check the box with the most appropriate goal status.]

2a. All Students Ready for Kindergarten

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p>*This is Cornerstone's first year with this goal:</p> <p>Percent of kindergarten students scoring average or high average on School Readiness on the Bracken Assessment will remain 80% or higher.</p> <p>Percent of kindergarten students scoring average or high average on Letters on the Bracken Assessment will remain 80% or higher.</p>	<p>Percent of kindergarten students scoring average or high average on School Readiness on the Bracken Assessment was 80% in 2015/16.</p> <p>Percent of kindergarten students scoring average or high average on Letters on the Bracken Assessment was 90% in 2015/16</p>	<p>Check one of the following:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Met</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal in Progress (only for multi-year goals)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> District/charter does not enroll students in Kindergarten</p>

2b. All Students in Third Grade Achieving Grade-Level Literacy

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p>The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will increase from 34.5% in 2015 to 39.5% in 2016. (Increase of 5 percentage points)</p>	<p>The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earned an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) increased from 36% in 2015 to 48% in 2016. (Increase of 12 percentage points)</p>	<p>Check one of the following:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Met</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal in Progress (only for multi-year goals)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> District/charter does not enroll students in grade 3</p>

2c. Close the Achievement Gap(s) Among All Groups

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p>The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earn an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) will continue to close the gap between the state by making a five percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2016 school year, compared to the previous school year.</p>	<p>The percentage of all students enrolled October 1 in grades 3-6 at Cornerstone Montessori who earned an achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards on all reading state accountability tests (MCA, MOD, MTAS) continued to close the gap between the state by making a 12.6 percentage point increase in proficiency during the 2016 school year, compared to the previous school year.</p>	<p>Check one of the following: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal in Progress <i>(only for multi-year goals)</i></p>

2d. All Students Career- and College-Ready by Graduation

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p><i>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2015-2016 school year.</i></p>	<p><i>Provide the result for the 2015-2016 school year that directly ties back to the established goal.</i></p>	<p>Check one of the following: <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal in Progress <i>(only for multi-year goals)</i></p>

2e. All Students Graduate

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p><i>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2015-2016 school year.</i></p>	<p><i>Provide the result for the 2015-2016 school year that directly ties back to the established goal.</i></p>	<p>Check one of the following: <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Goal in Progress <i>(only for multi-year goals)</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District/charter does not enroll students in grade 12</p>

3. Identified Needs Based on Data

[Note: Data that was reviewed to determine needs may include state-level accountability tests, such as Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) and/or local-level data, such as local assessments, attendance, graduation, mobility, remedial course-taking rates, child poverty, etc.]

- **NEED:** We observe many children performing at a higher level in the classroom than they demonstrate on MCA assessments. There are also a significant number of children struggling with reading skills regardless of the method of assessment. We also learned that children who worked directly with the Literacy Specialist made from .75 to 1.25 years growth between September and February 2014/2015.
- **DECISION:** Consider increasing the Literacy Specialist position from .5 to .75, implement an all school Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) period where the Literacy Specialist observes, models for, and mentors teachers and parents in best practice as they guide readers at all levels.
- **NEED: MATH** We observe that many children are performing at a higher level in the classroom than they are able to demonstrate on their MCA assessments.
- **DECISION: MATH** We implemented an IXL program to help children connect what they were doing in the classroom on the Montessori materials to the abstract presentation of that same work on computerized assessments.
- **DATA:** 2015-16 MCA Math - % Meets – 3rd/42.9%, 4th/6.3%, 5th/22.7%, 6th/0% - % Exceeds – 3rd/7.1; 2015-16 MCA Reading - % Meets – 3rd/42.9%, 4th/18.8%, 5th/45.5%, 6th/15.4% - % Exceeds – 3rd/14.3%, 4th/6.3%, 5th/27.3%, 6th/7.7%
- *Include only the key data used to determine identified needs.
Limit response to 200 words.*

4. Systems, Strategies and Support Category

4a. Students

- *Describe the areas below. Include only the district focus areas for the 2015-2016 school year. Limit response to 200 words.*

Process for assessing and evaluating student progress toward meeting state and local academic standards.

Focus area: Reading. Cornerstone gave the Developmental Reading Assessment as a baseline for all new students and for students not reading at grade level at the end of the previous year. All children not reading at grade level received immediate support prioritized in the following way: 4 – 6 grade students worked directly with the Literacy Specialist on decoding, fluency, and comprehension. 1 – 3 grade students received support from classroom teachers and assistants via weekly structured sessions of Orton-Gillingham and daily reading support in pairs or small groups; 1-3 grade students also had the opportunity to work with volunteer reading tutors through Experience Corps. (Teachers, assistants, and volunteers were mentored by the Literacy Specialist to ensure best practice and consistency.) Cornerstone gave a benchmark assessment in January for all children not reading at grade level and again at the end of the year to monitor progress and continued needs. Cornerstone gave the MCA in reading in April and used those results to inform continued focus.

Process to disaggregate data by student group.

Cornerstone looks at data for each student group by using the filters on the Minnesota Report Card on the MDE website as well as manually grouping children after a review of individual scores.

4b. Teachers and Principals

- Describe the areas below. Include only the district focus areas for the 2015-2016 school year. Limit response to 200 words.

System to review and evaluate the effectiveness of:

Focus area: AMI Certified Montessori in the public sector

Instruction: Principal conducts one formal observation/month in each classroom and meets to discuss planning and delivery of instruction as well as adherence to Montessori Philosophy. Instruction is to be developmentally appropriate, incorporating all aspects of human tendencies and appealing the developmental characteristics of elementary aged children, K-6. Instruction stems from Montessori and extends to cover MN state standards not already covered.

Curriculum: Montessori Curriculum prioritizes “learning how to learn”. Montessori Curriculum was analyzed and documented by AMI/USA in 2014/15 for its coverage of Core Curriculum and is analyzed yearly for additions necessary to ensure the coverage of Minnesota State Standards.

Teacher evaluations; Teachers are evaluated using the “Montessori Guide Effectiveness Rubric”, including: Prepared Environment, Presentations (planning and delivery), Observation (Assessment and Follow Up), Family Partnership and Education, Professional Responsibilities, and the Art of Normalization (Classroom Management). A percentage of a teacher’s evaluation is based on the progress of the students as measured by the MCAs.

Principal evaluations: The principal is evaluated by children, staff, families and the Board annually through the Head of School Evaluation Survey, staff satisfaction surveys, student surveys regarding school culture, and the Parent Satisfaction Survey.

4c. District

- *Describe the areas below. Include only the district focus areas for the 2015-2016 school year. Limit response to 200 words.*
 - *Include the district practices around high-quality instruction and rigorous curriculum which integrate:*
 - *Technology*
 - *Collaborative professional culture*

Cornerstone is the first public school in Minnesota to be certified by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). This certification is acknowledged worldwide for advancing schools of exceptional quality and academic rigor. The entire system fosters a collaborative professional culture that allows our teachers to connect, plan and support each other on a bi-monthly basis, and connect to a national Elementary Association of Montessori teachers for on-going mentoring and collaboration in all aspects of their work.

Cornerstone's curriculum is integrated across all subject areas and is differentiated with respect to both the complexity of the concepts and every learning style. Montessori materials are used to guide children from the most concrete introduction of a concept to abstraction, providing a strong foundation and scaffolding necessary for a sound progression of skills. Each lesson is given with the developmental stage of children in mind and when individual children show readiness, creating passion and capability in children for sustained, concentrated, and experiential work. Though down-played in an experiential, hands-on program, technology is a natural part of their work in the classroom for research, classroom newspapers and for connecting their work to their surrounding community, supporting for example, planning and execution of community service work.

5. Equitable Access to Excellent Teachers

On June 1, 2015, MDE submitted a plan to the U.S. Department of Education that required all states to address long term needs for improving equitable access of all students to excellent educators. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) required that states address gaps in access to experienced, licensed and in-field teachers. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed on December 10, 2015, now requires states to evaluate and publicly report whether low-income and minority students are disproportionately served by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.

To reach the goals of the WBWF, it is important to ensure that all students, particularly students from low income families and students of color have equitable access to teachers and principals who can help them reach their potential. Following the 2016 legislative session, WBWF now requires:

1. Districts to have a process to examine the equitable distribution of teachers and strategies to ensure low-income and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, ineffective, or out-of-field teachers.
2. District advisory committees to recommend to the school board the means to improve students' equitable access to effective and more diverse teachers.

In fall 2016, MDE will be engaging with a variety of stakeholders to unpack the definition of *effective* teachers in ESSA and WBWF as well as determine how the state might be able to evaluate and publicly report equitable access data. MDE will communicate the outcomes of these discussions to all districts.

In this 2015-2016 summary report submission, please provide the information below.

- *Describe the district process to examine the distribution of experienced and qualified teachers across the district and within school sites using data.*
 - *Include how the district reviews data to examine the equitable distribution of teachers.*
 - *Include how the district uses the data to set forth strategies to ensure low-income and minority children have equitable access to excellent teachers.*
 - *Limit response to 200 words.*

Cornerstone's mission is to increase access to high quality education for all children. Founded on this principle we are driven daily to make sure our low income and minority children have equitable access to the very best we have to offer. AMI Montessori teachers are trained to directly address each child's learning needs to ensure achievement on the deepest level. Research has documented the success of AMI schools in increasing test scores in low-income communities, demonstrating significant impact on student achievement throughout an entire academic career. This is happening at Cornerstone. In 2015/2016 the state Free/Reduced population reading proficiency scores stayed static, Cornerstone's Free/Reduced population reading proficiency scores improved by 8 percentage points. While reading proficiency rates in the St. Paul School District for Free/Reduced population went from 26.1% in 2015 to 27.9% in 2016, that same population at Cornerstone went from 27.5% to 35.3%. We believe this is due to our targeted reading work, and more importantly to the way children at Cornerstone feel about themselves as capable learners and important members of their community. All services are collaborative, related to the work children are engaged in with diverse peers and integrated at least 90% of the time.