



## ANNUAL EDUCATION REPORT (AER) COVER LETTER

February 2, 2023

Dear WGM Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2022-2023 educational progress for Walden Green Montessori. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, accountability, and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Mark for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following website: <https://bit.ly/3nf33Ts>, or you may review a copy in the front office.

For the 2022-2023 school year, schools were identified based on previous years' performance using definitions and labels as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) school is one that had at least one underperforming student subgroup in 2021-22. An Additional Targeted Support (ATS) school is one that had a student subgroup performing at the same level as the lowest 5% of all schools in the state in 2021-22. A Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) school is one whose performance was in the lowest 5% of all schools in the state or had a graduation rate at or below 67% in 2021-22. Some schools are not identified with any of these labels. In these cases, no label is given.

Walden Green Montessori was identified as a school that did **not** need a label. We have worked diligently to close our achievement gaps among sub-groups and to ensure all of our students prosper from their daily instruction in a holistic learning environment.

Nonetheless, there are key challenges for Walden Green's academic data. We are a public Montessori school with a vision for student growth that is different from the test-prep mentality of traditional education. The brief, snapshot approaches typified by M-STEP or NWEA are not sensitive enough to capture what Montessori students actually know and are able to do. Likewise, standardized assessments only provide a glimpse of one particular day in a child's education. The data is valuable for our school improvement process; however, it only reflects one piece of the pie when it comes to measuring overall student growth. Another key challenge for Walden Green's data is our school size. We are a small learning environment, with around 30 total students in each grade, and we service children from various different districts around West Michigan. This makes data trends fluctuate more frequently from year to year.

In order to accelerate student growth and close gaps in achievement over the past two years, the following key initiatives are underway for Walden Green learners:

- ▶ Updated MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) Program - a comprehensive framework used to provide targeted support for all learners: academic, behavioral, social and emotional services
- ▶ F.A.S.T. Reading Intervention Training for K-3rd teachers
- ▶ Renewed commitment to small group instruction and Montessori-based practices (with fewer COVID protocols)
- ▶ K-8 teachers utilize coaching sessions from NWEA to help increase their expertise in systematically utilizing MAP Growth data for differentiated instruction

- ▶ Infuse more NWEA-aligned vocabulary into our math and literacy instruction
- ▶ MAP Accelerator for 3rd-8th Grade: a personalized learning program includes recommended practice problems, instant feedback, scaffolded help, personalized spiral review, and instructional videos
- ▶ Offer free after school tutoring from late November to May (Tuesdays + Thursdays)
- ▶ NWEA Growth “Goal Setting” Strategy for 4th-8th grade students (to bolster student ownership)
- ▶ Additional K-3 reading tools, materials, and resources
- ▶ Additional paraprofessional in 4th/5th grade (targeting lowest performing subgroup)

These school initiatives will pave the way for addressing areas we can improve in accordance with the following AER Report (<https://bit.ly/3nf33Ts>).

State law requires that we also report additional information on the following:

#### 1. PROCESS FOR ASSIGNING PUPILS TO THE SCHOOL

- ▶ Each year we send a notice home for all enrolled students with detailed instructions for re-enrollment before the stated deadline (typically the end of March). After this process, siblings are allowed to apply for grade level openings. The open enrollment period is also posted in the newspaper. For new families wishing to join our school community, we provide and accept applications from parents and guardians wishing to enroll their child for the upcoming school year before the stated deadline (typically mid-April). If there are more applications than spaces available for any particular grade level, we hold a random selection drawing for the spaces available. That date is posted each year.

#### 2. THE STATUS OF THE 3-5 YEAR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

- ▶ All districts in Michigan are on a continuous improvement pathway that supports a district’s needs with data, tools, differentiated supports, and funding to improve whole child outcomes. The following school improvement strategies are underway:
  - Improve NWEA MAP Growth Math K-8: Our goal is to augment our math instruction so that Walden Green students will demonstrate an average 5% growth in math proficiency from fall to spring on the NWEA MAP Growth Assessment. Teachers will engage in on-going professional learning and follow-up coaching on the use of instructional technology in mathematics to support conceptual and procedural understanding.
  - Improve K-3 Reading: Our goal is to provide K-3 students systematic and explicit phonics intervention/instruction in order to improve lower elementary NWEA reading proficiency by 5%. Phonological awareness training is a general practice aimed at enhancing young children’s phonological awareness abilities. Phonological awareness refers to the ability to detect or manipulate the sounds in words independent of meaning and is considered a precursor to reading. Phonological awareness training can involve various training activities that focus on teaching children to identify, detect, delete, segment, or blend segments of spoken words.

#### 3. A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH SPECIALIZED SCHOOL

- ▶ Walden Green Montessori is located in the beautiful resort town of Spring Lake, Michigan with a population of 2,529. To fulfill the need of Montessori within our community, we became one of the state’s first, non-profit public charter schools. We hold true to the core tenets of Maria Montessori’s time-tested methodology and have made certain that we are addressing the Common Core State Standards as well. We built our own building in 2007, which sits in the middle of beautiful woods, allowing our children to interact daily with the natural wonders around us. Our stakeholders

continually strive to improve our fine school and educate our students to prepare them for the world beyond our doors. We do this through child-centered activities that: develop curiosity, creativity and character; foster independence and social responsibility within a community framework; inspire the love of learning independently and collaboratively; highlight global justice, fairness, and peace.

4. IDENTIFY HOW TO ACCESS A COPY OF THE CORE CURRICULUM, A DESCRIPTION OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION, AND AN EXPLANATION OF THE VARIANCES FROM THE STATE'S MODEL
  - ▶ Walden Green students are taught based on principles of Montessori education. Our students learn through hands-on materials that address the traditional standards in learning. We offer a Montessori-based education that integrates 21st Century Learning Skills as well as Common Core State Standards. Rather than learning as a whole class, our children work independently or in small groups on topics that are specific to their needs. Our classrooms are multi-aged so that each student can work at his/her own pace in a given content area. For further details, visit: <https://www.waldengreen.org/who-we-are.html>
  
5. THE AGGREGATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS FOR ANY LOCAL COMPETENCY TESTS OR NATIONALLY NORMED ACHIEVEMENT TESTS
  - ▶ Reading: Percent Proficient
    - 74.7% (Spring 2021, NWEA MAP Growth Assessment)
    - 82.0% (Spring 2022, NWEA MAP Growth Assessment)
  - ▶ Math: Percent Proficient
    - 71.4% (Spring 2021, NWEA MAP Growth Assessment)
    - 77.9% (Spring 2022, NWEA MAP Growth Assessment)
  - ▶ Reading: Median Growth Percentile (goal = 50)
    - 51.5 (Fall to Spring, 2021-2022, NWEA)
  - ▶ Math: Median Growth Percentile (goal = 50)
    - 50.5 (Fall to Spring, 2021-2022, NWEA)
  
6. IDENTIFY THE NUMBER AND PERCENT OF STUDENTS REPRESENTED BY PARENTS AT PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES
  - ▶ Walden Green Montessori strives for at least 90% participation during parent/teacher conferences. Our staff will accommodate parents' schedules so that the necessary communication occurs between home and school each year.
    - 227 students, 92% (2020-2021)
    - 230 students, 98% (2021-2022)

As you can see, there is much to celebrate as a school community from this past year and much to look forward to in the year ahead. Thank you for partnering with us to help your children reach their full human potential!

For a stronger Walden Green,  
*Mark Roessing*

Mark Roessing  
Principal  
Walden Green Montessori