

# ▶ Highland Mill Montessori School



## A Message from the Principal

To our Highland Mill Montessori School families:

This is the annual School Progress Report for Highland Mill Montessori, part of our effort to keep families fully informed about our students' academic progress, our staff and our school environment.

As you view the report, you will see many positive indicators of our school environment. Our staff is highly qualified, fully licensed, Montessori-trained and dedicated to providing a child-centered learning environment. Additionally, 47 percent of staff members hold advanced degrees and 11 percent are National Board-certified.

On the End-of-Grade math test, our composite proficiency rate rose from 63 percent in the previous year to 81 percent (without retests). Furthermore, on the reading test, our composite proficiency rate increased from 62 percent to 68 percent (without retests). We achieved High Growth in math and Expected Growth in reading. Well done to our students and staff.

Last year, I was one of 50 principals in CMS to be given Freedom and Flexibility with Accountability. This means I was given some additional autonomy to implement new strategies, design a master schedule and use our resources to keep Highland Mill on the path to continued growth and higher academic achievement.

One of the key features of our master schedule is to provide tutoring time for students throughout the year in math, reading and science. Our specialists, literacy facilitator and lead Montessori teacher will provide lessons to enhance understanding of concepts

*(Principal's message continued on back)*

## KEY FACTS

*Data effective as of spring 2009*

### Principal

Maria (Terry) Ropic

email: [maria.cummings@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:maria.cummings@cms.k12.nc.us)

Highland Mill Montessori School is a full Montessori magnet.

### Grades

Pre-K - 5 (2008-2009)

Pre-K - 6 (2009-2010)

### School Population

- 268 Students
- 21 Teachers
- 1 Assistant Principal
- 1 Student Services Specialist
- 22 Support Staff

### Student Demographics

- 68.7% African American
- 13.8% White
- 6.0% Hispanic
- 3.4% Asian
- 8.2% Other
- 36.6% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch

### Learning Community

Central

Area Superintendent: Joel Ritchie

324 N. McDowell Street

Suite 100

Charlotte, NC 28204

980-343-1465

email: [j.ritchie@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:j.ritchie@cms.k12.nc.us)

## Highland Mill Montessori School

3201 Clemson Avenue

Charlotte, NC 28205

980-343-5525

<http://pages.cms.k12.nc.us/highlandmill>



CMS 2010 Strategic Plan Goals	Key Performance Measures	CMS 2010 Goal	CMS Result 2008 - 2009	School Result 2008 - 2009
<p><b>High Academic Achievement</b></p> <p>Students in grades three through eight who do not pass the End-of-Grade tests may take the test again. Retests often raise a school's score at least slightly, because some students pass the test on the second try. Retest results were not included in school scores until 2008-2009. Comparing the 2007-2008 scores and the 2008-2009 scores is therefore not valid, because the scores were not calculated the same way.</p> <p>Disparity between socioeconomic groups is shown as a positive percentage when non-economically disadvantaged students outscore economically disadvantaged students; a negative percentage indicates the reverse.</p> <p><i>Data effective as of 7/14/09</i></p>	Students performing at or above grade level overall <sup>1</sup>	—	72%	<b>83.3%</b>
	Students performing at or above grade level in reading	95%	68%	<b>78.2%</b>
	Students performing at or above grade level in math	88%	80%	<b>90.8%</b>
	Students performing at or above grade level in science	80%	60%	<b>75.0%</b>
	Disparity between racial/ethnic groups in reading	10%	34%	<b>10.2%</b>
	Disparity between racial/ethnic groups in math	10%	26%	<b>10.6%</b>
	Disparity between racial/ethnic groups in science	10%	44%	<b>NA</b>
	Disparity between socioeconomic groups in reading	10%	28%	<b>17.3%</b>
	Disparity between socioeconomic groups in math	10%	18%	<b>2.4%</b>
	Disparity between socioeconomic groups in science	10%	32%	<b>25.7%</b>
<p><b>Effective Educators</b></p>	Teachers deemed highly qualified, having appropriate educational backgrounds and state certification(s) for the grade levels and subjects they are teaching	99%	100%	<b>100%</b>
	National Board-certified teachers	17%	13%	<b>11%</b>
	Teachers with graduate degrees	36%	35%	<b>47%</b>
	Teachers' average years of experience	11.2	10.3	<b>12.9</b>
<p><b>Adequate Resources &amp; Facilities</b></p>	Student/Computer Ratio	5:1	3:1	<b>2:1</b>
<p><b>Safe &amp; Orderly Schools</b></p>	Passed the CMS safe school audit	YES	YES	<b>YES</b>
	Parents who indicate this is a safe school <sup>2</sup>	70%	96%	<b>98.6%</b>
	Students who indicate this is a safe school <sup>2</sup>	80%	93%	<b>88.9%</b>
	Teachers who indicate this is a safe school <sup>1,2</sup>	—	89%	<b>94.3%</b>
	Number of incidents resulting in in-school suspensions <sup>1,3</sup>	—	—	<b>0</b>
	Number of incidents resulting in out-of-school suspensions <sup>1,3</sup>	—	—	<b>13.1</b>
<p><b>Freedom &amp; Flexibility with Accountability</b></p>	Principal has been granted additional freedom and flexibility <sup>1</sup>	—	—	<b>YES</b>
<p><b>World-Class Service</b></p>	Parents who indicate satisfaction with the responsiveness of staff at this school <sup>2</sup>	80%	88%	<b>80.0%</b>
<p><b>Strong Parent &amp; Community Connections</b></p>	Parents who indicate satisfaction overall with this school <sup>1,2</sup>	—	86%	<b>85.1%</b>
	Number of volunteer hours <sup>4</sup>	Increase by 25% district-wide	—	<b>472</b>
	Number of business and community partnerships	Increase by 25% district-wide	—	<b>0</b>

<sup>1</sup>Not a CMS 2010 goal

<sup>2</sup>Based on responses to 2008-09 survey; multiple survey items may have been used to create a composite

<sup>3</sup>Incidents per 100 students

<sup>4</sup>Per 100 students

# CMS Accountability Measures

The learning of students in public education is measured in multiple ways. There are assessments given at regular intervals by CMS—tests that we use to measure how students are learning as the school year progresses. Other tests are required by the state and given once or twice a year, such as End-of-Course and End-of-Grade tests. Some of the state test results are also used to calculate district progress on the federal standard of Adequate Yearly Progress for each student. This page provides brief explanations of some of the measures and tests used in CMS.

## ► Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

Our school **DID** make AYP  
(9 of 9 goals met)

The federal No Child Left Behind Act requires that every school make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is an all-or-nothing standard: Every target must be met.

State test results are used to set AYP targets. There are separate targets for the school as a whole and for nine subgroups of students: white, black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian, multiracial, economically disadvantaged students, students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities. Subgroups of students are measured separately so that an overall score for a class or a school does not mask poor results within a subgroup.

Some schools are more diverse than others, so the number of subgroups varies by school. Therefore, the number of AYP targets varies by school, too. Some schools may have only a few targets to meet; others may have the maximum, which is 41. School attendance and graduation rates are also measured for AYP.

For a more complete overview of AYP, visit [www.dpi.state.nc.us/nclb/abcayp/overview/ayp](http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/nclb/abcayp/overview/ayp)

For details of AYP results for our school and its student groups, visit <http://ayp.ncpublicschools.org>

## ► ABC Designation

Our school's designation: **School of Distinction**  
(DID meet growth expectations)

**Proficiency: 83.3%**

The North Carolina ABCs program was introduced more than a decade ago to help schools improve. It uses two basic measures to assess a school's performance: the Average Growth of students (at right); and the Performance Composite, which measures how well students performed against a state-set standard of academic achievement.

Schools are given one of seven designations. In descending order, they are: Honor School of Excellence, School of Excellence, School of Distinction, School of Progress, No Recognition, Priority School, and Low Performing.

For more information about ABCs, visit <http://abcs.ncpublicschools.org/abcs>

## ► Average Growth

State Standard: 80%  
**Our School: 83.1%**

Did our students meet the state's expectation for academic growth? Each student is expected to perform as well (or better) on the End-of-Grade assessment as he or she did, on average, during the previous two years. Average Growth for a school is calculated by comparing actual performance to expected performance and then averaging the difference across all students and all subjects. The score above reflects the combined growth rate of all of our students. To make expected growth, a school must have a score of 80% or higher.

## ► Students Making or Exceeding a Year's Worth of Growth

State Standard: 60%  
**Our School: 59.4%**

Did our students learn as much as they were expected to learn this year? As described above, the state sets expectations for each student based on individual performance for the previous two years. Across the state, about half of students typically meet or exceed this growth expectation. To earn the high-growth designation, a school must meet the average-growth standard described above and also have more than 60% of its students make expected growth.

## ► Amount of Growth for Students in the Lowest Achieving Group

**Our School: 87.3%**

Are we helping our low achievers catch up? Historically, some poor and minority students have trailed their classmates in academic achievement. This is called the achievement gap, and closing it is one of the biggest challenges in public education. If the lower-achieving students at a school show academic growth at a faster rate than higher-achieving students, the achievement gap is narrowed. When the percentage for this measure is higher than the Average Growth for the school, the school is closing the achievement gap.

## ► Positive Responses to Multiple Student Survey Items

<b>Our School's Results:</b>	<b>Safety</b>	<b>89%</b>
	<b>Encouragement</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>98%</b>

Do our students perceive this school as safe and welcoming? This measure is subjective—it is taken from a student survey.

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*(Principal's message continued)*

and give students additional time for practice and mastery. We know these added efforts will result in higher levels of proficiency for all students.

Our students have a full day of academics as well as cultural studies and the arts. Our PTA also provides additional before- and after-school cultural arts activities to enrich our school environment. This year our students stepped out into the community to explore and expand their science knowledge. Staff, community, students and parents worked hard to clean up Little Sugar Creek. In fact, Highland Mill is now officially designated the maintenance crew of the creek. These hands-on experiences helped our students better understand and apply science concepts, resulting in improved achievement on the End-of-Grade science test. Students also participated in Math Olympics, chess

and Lego robotics. We will continue to provide these opportunities for our students through the efforts of the PTA and parent volunteers.

With increasing academic achievement and the provision of a global view through cultural studies, we are preparing our Highland Mill Montessori students to become competitive in a global society.

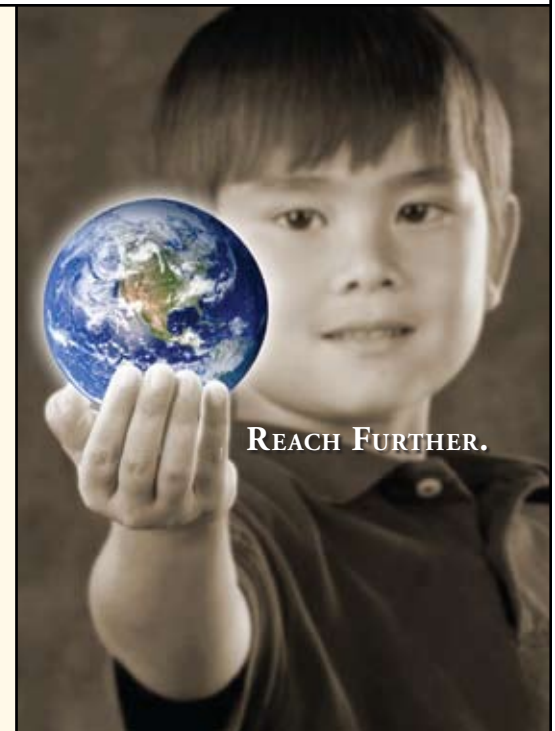
Sincerely,  
Terry Ropic  
*Principal*

## What is the School Progress Report?

In 2006, we introduced the *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Strategic Plan 2010* outlining our vision and strategy to educate our students to compete locally, nationally and internationally.

The plan outlines seven areas of concentration: high academic achievement; effective educators; adequate resources and facilities; safe and orderly schools; freedom and flexibility with accountability; world-class service, and strong parent and community connections. This report summarizes how our school performed in the 2008-09 school year in making progress on these seven goals. On page 3, you will also find an explanation of federal and state accountability measures.

Educators and parents have a common goal of preparing our children to compete in an ever-growing global community. Working together requires frequent dialogue between school and parents, so please feel free to contact the principal or any staff member at our school.



REACH FURTHER.

