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## Background

The Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center (NPMLC) opened its doors in the fall of 2015 and recently successfully completed its ninth school year. The NPMLC is a public charter school that is part of the Northland Pines School District. NPMLC was created by a committee of parents, community members, teachers and administrators. It was created after the success of SOAR Middle School and in hopes to provide elementary students an alternative learning approach that may fit some students better than the traditional model does.

NPMLC approach to education is rooted in Montessori methodology, which was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator. It is characterized by an emphasis on independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child's natural psychological, physical and social development. The Montessori approach to learning has been time tested, with over 100 years of success in diverse cultures throughout the world. Montessori students learn to be critical thinkers, work collaboratively, and take ownership of their learning. Students are placed in a multiage learning environment in which students have the opportunity to learn from mentors and become leaders. The hands-on approach to learning emphasizes teaching students concrete concepts before moving onto abstract ideas and often engages students in their learning through play. This annual report is an attempt to share what the year at NPMLC was like. If you have any questions or comments about this report or NPMLC please feel free to contact Tony Duffek, NPMLC Principal, at [tduffek@npsd.k12.wi.us](mailto:tduffek@npsd.k12.wi.us) or 715-542-3632. The best way to learn more about NPMLC is to come and visit, we welcome you all!





**Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center Mission** ...To support the whole child socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually through the use of Montessori methodology.

**Values of Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center:**

- Recognize and celebrate the unique gifts of students through personalized learning.
- Create a prepared environment that encourages responsibility to self and others.
- Promote student, family and community engagement.
- Foster citizenship skills through environmental education and organized community learning experiences.





## Enrollment

NPMLC opened in the fall of 2015 with 48 students in grades 4K, 5K, 1st, 2nd and 3rd. For the 2016-17 School year it expanded to another classroom, added 4th grade and NPMLC continued to grow enrollment until it reached the capacity of 72 students. At the time of this publication, NPMLC is expecting to open in the fall of 2024 with 69 students and be at capacity in grades 4K-3rd grade. Aside from being at capacity in most grade levels we have a waiting list that continues to grow. Currently NPMLC has an established waiting list for most grade levels, totaling 18 students. Most of the students on the waiting list are for 4K and Kindergarten. The chart below indicates the amount of students in each grade level for the 2023-2024 school year. We had some students that moved out of the district in 3rd and 4th grade and that is why our E2 classroom numbers are lower.

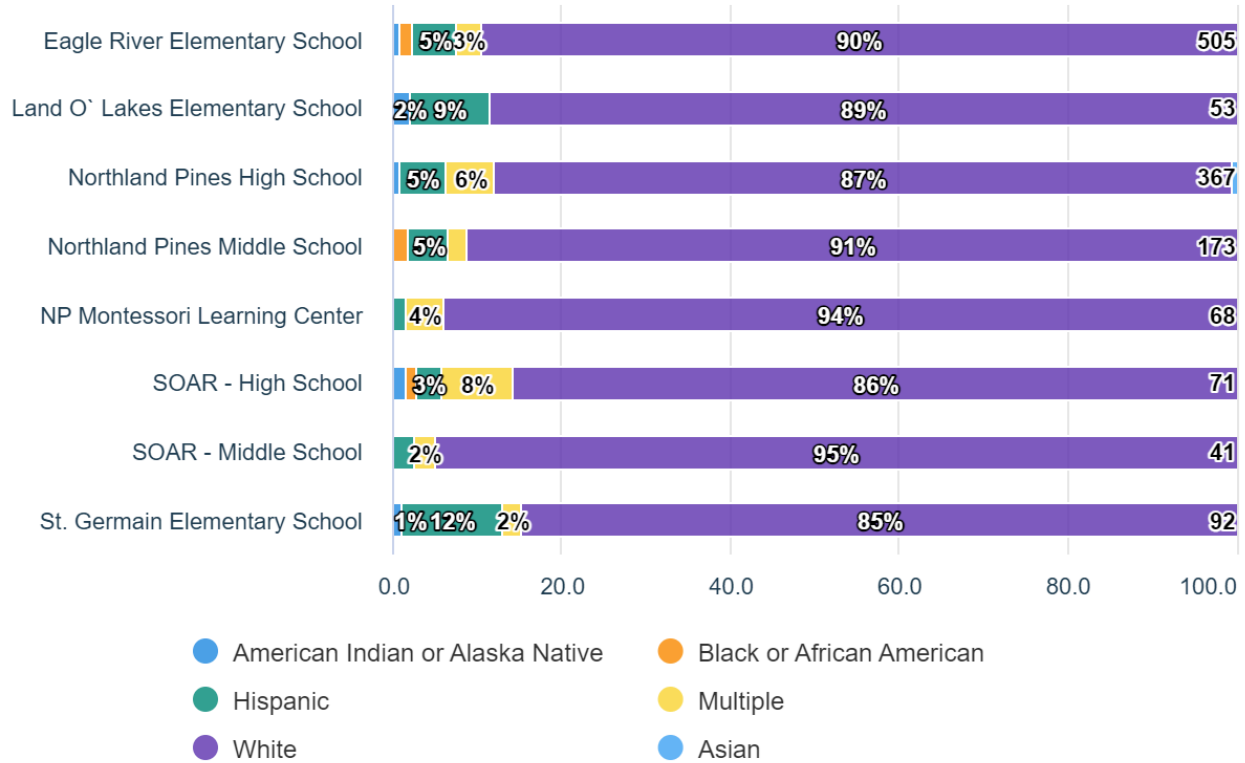
Grade	Number of students
4K	12
5K	12
1	12
2	12
3	9
4	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	68

## Racial Diversity

Although NPMLC has a diverse population it does not have a great deal of diversity when it comes to race and ethnicity. NPMLC racial diversity is similar to what the rest of the NPSD schools have, as you can see in the chart on the next page. Even though there is not a great deal of racial diversity there is a diverse group of learners. We have advanced learners, students with disabilities, students from homes of low socioeconomic status and struggling learners just like any school does, and they all are successful in the Montessori setting. Below are a few graphs that portray the diversity in Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center compared to the Northland Pines School District. 94% of the students are White, 4% multiple races and 1% Hispanic. This is a little less racial diversity in comparison to other schools in our district.



## Northland Pines School District Ethnicity Percentage By Building

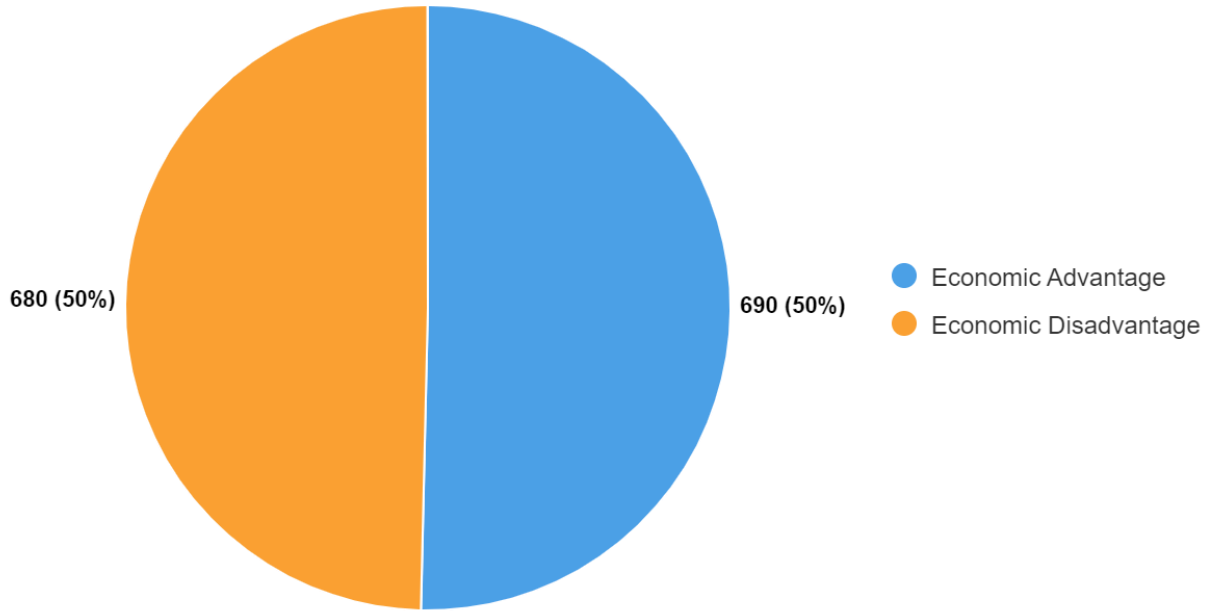


## Socioeconomic Status

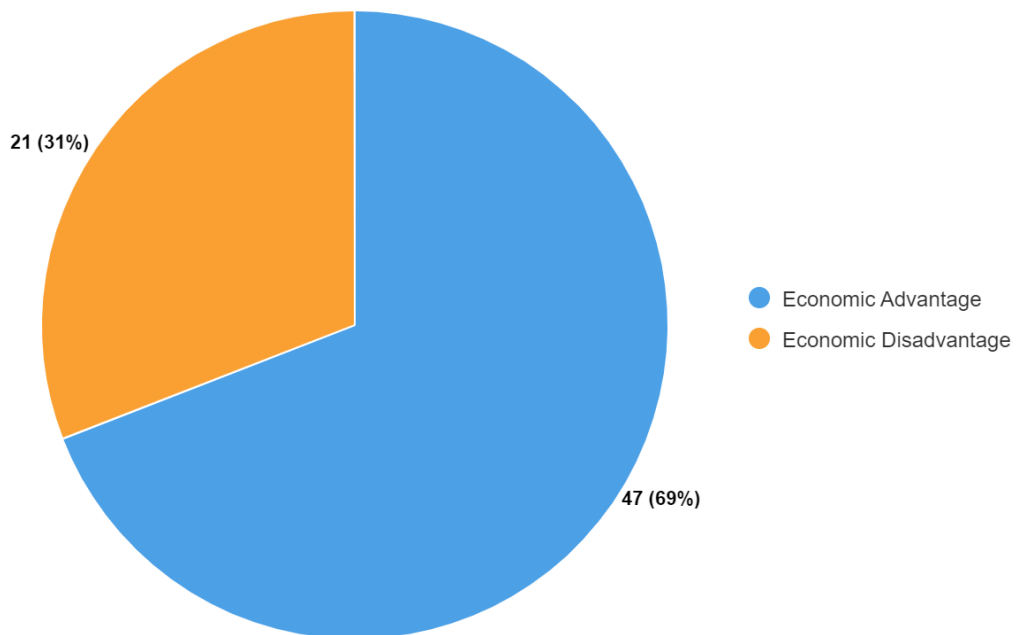
The charts on the next page show the enrollment percentages of students identified as economically advantaged versus students that are economically disadvantaged. NPMLC does not have as many students that are economically disadvantaged as the rest of Northland Pines, but data indicates that NPMLC does not have much of an achievement gap between economically disadvantaged versus economically advantaged students.



### Northland Pines School District Socioeconomic Status



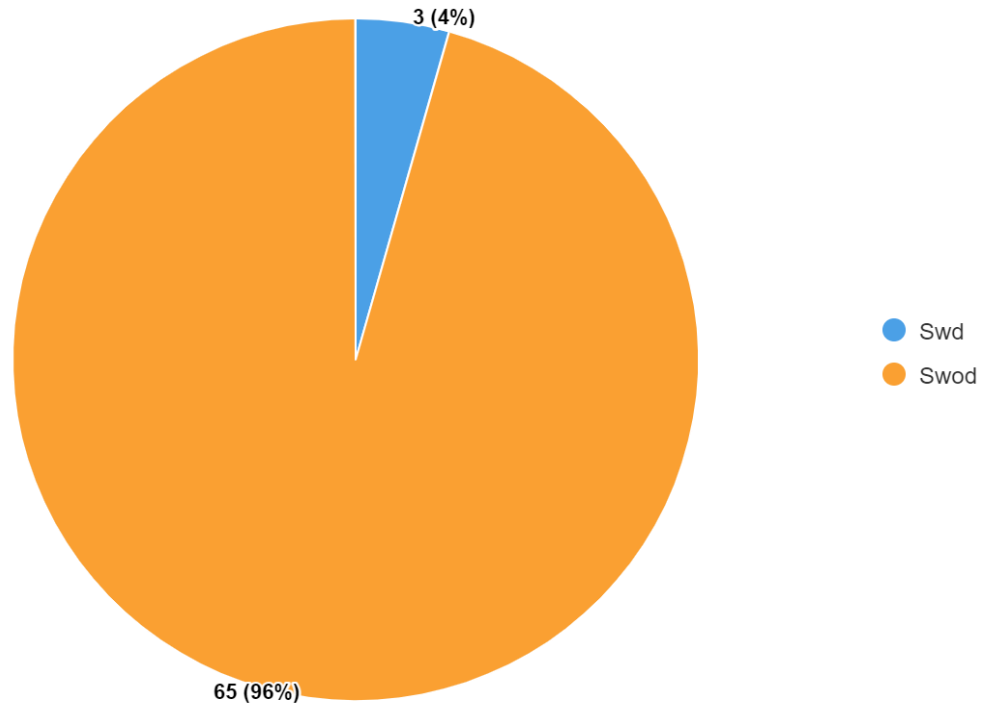
### Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center Socioeconomic Status





## Students With Disabilities Demographics

As you can see in the chart below, NPMLC does not have many students identified as having disabilities, only 4% of them have disabilities which is less than the rest of the Northland Pines School District which equates to having 13% with disabilities.



## Demographic Conclusion

As you can see from the charts above, NPMLC is not as diverse as the rest of the district when it comes to the amount of students that are from lower socioeconomic status, for race, and for students with disabilities. On the positive side, when looking at students from NPMLC that are considered educational disadvantaged (minorities, students with disabilities and students from low socioeconomic status) there is not an achievement gap. Student achievement scores of students of educational disadvantaged are very comparable compared to same aged students.

## Student Achievement

Charter Schools are accountable for student learning and often have more levels of accountability than traditional schools. Charter Schools have to take part in state assessments such as the Forward Exam. They also have to take part in a universal assessment to track student progress. NPMLC has chosen STAR as the universal assessment to track student progress in basic math and literacy skills. NPMLC sets annual goals with the use of STAR and other data and uses a dashboard to report on these goals to the Northland Pines School District Charter School Governance Board and Northland Pines School District School Board. Below is the dashboard of goals, action steps and results for the 2023-2024 school year. As you can see we accomplished our goals this year. NPMLC students are performing at high academic levels. We contribute this to the hard work of the students and staff. Over the years we have modified our curriculum and programming to better meet the needs of students and we are seeing the results in high student achievement within our local assessments.

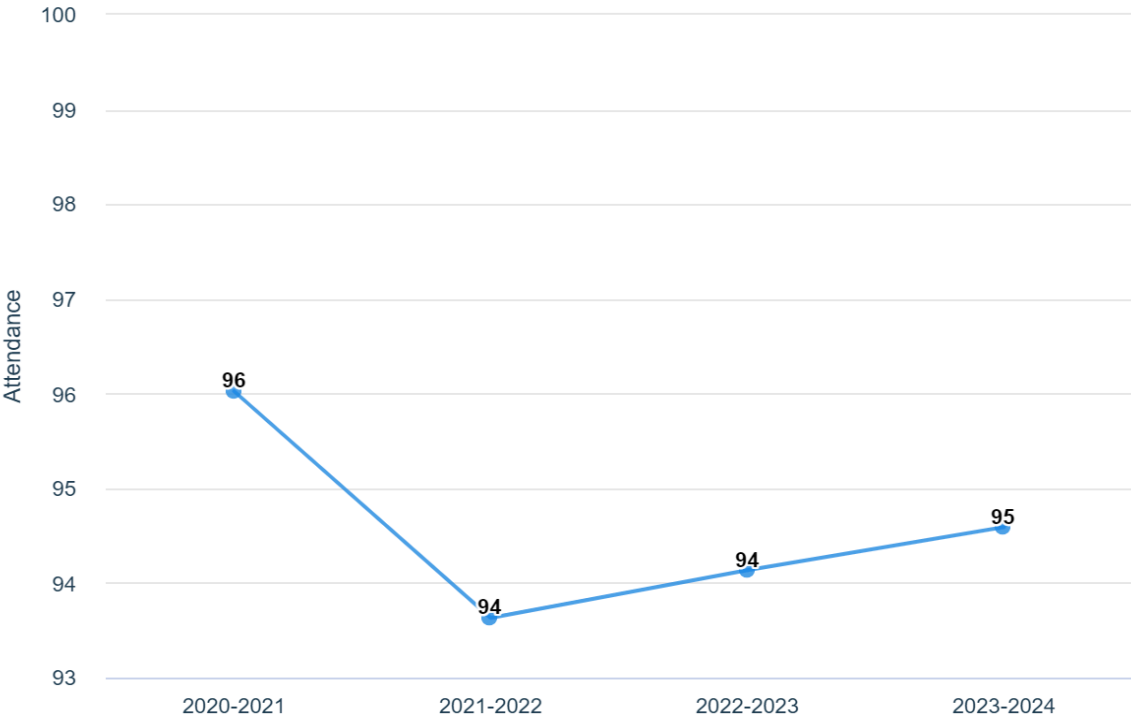
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Baseline Data</b>	<b>Action Plan</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>End of Year</b>
By May of 2024 94% of the NPMLC students in 4K - 1st grade will be proficient in Early Literacy on the Star Assessment and 75% of the 2nd - 4th graders will be proficient in reading on the Star Assessment	<b>Early Literacy</b> <b>Tier I - 91%</b> <b>Tier II- 3%</b> <b>Tier III- 6%</b>  <b>Reading</b> <b>Tier I - 64%</b> <b>Tier II - 9%</b> <b>Tier III - 27%</b>	- Improve knowledge of Science of Reading - Focus on small group instruction - Implement upgraded Wonders program for literacy in E2 - In-service focus on literacy - Build leadership capacity in literacy	Early Literacy (no 4K included) Tier I - 100% Tier II- 0% Tier III- 0%  Reading (2nd - 4th) Tier I - 84% Tier II - 6% Tier III - 10%	Early Literacy (no 4K included) Tier I - 94% Tier II- 3% Tier III- 3%  Reading (2nd - 4th) Tier I - 78% Tier II - 9% Tier III - 13%
By May of 2024 85% of the NPMLC students in 1st - 4th grade will be proficient in Math on the Star Assessment.	<b>Math</b> <b>Tier I - 77%</b> <b>Tier II- 14%</b> <b>Tier III - 9%</b>	- Use small group instruction - Develop more frequent and systematic formative assessments - Pursue PD in math instruction - Explore Bridges intervention kit to target students with lagging skills	Math Tier I - 91% Tier II- 7% Tier III - 2%	Math Tier I - 96% Tier II- 2% Tier III - 2%



<p>By May of 2024 we will improve school wide attendance so on the 2023-2024 school report card our Chronic Absenteeism rate will be 92 and the School-wide Attendance Rate will be 96. The report card will not be released until October 2024.</p>	<p>According to the DPI School Report card the 2022-2023 Chronic Absenteeism rate was 90.7 and the School-wide Attendance Rate was 94.0.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include information about the importance of attendance in newsletters and communications home.</li> <li>- Send letters to families with chronic absenteeism and follow up with phone calls. Set up attendance barrier meetings if necessary.</li> <li>- Keep an attendance data board to track student attendance.</li> <li>- Teachers will focus on attendance at parent-teacher conferences with families that are having difficulties with attendance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attendance tracking form is utilized.</li> <li>- Letters for 5 and 10 days are going home.</li> <li>- Include information in newsletters and parent-teacher conferences.</li> </ul>	<p>Attendance rate was 94.67 which is better than the last two years but not quite to the goal of 96.</p>
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**Attendance**

Attendance has been a focus for the district because student attendance rates have gone down across the district, state, and nation ever since COVID. NPMLC attendance rate this year was higher than the past two years (as you can see in the chart below). It did not rebound to the 96 percentile range of the 2020-2021 school year but that year it was higher due to virtual learning. Students were not marked absent when doing remote learning so the rate for that year is inflated compared to other years. NPMLC attendance is above the state average and showing improvement.



## Curriculum and Instruction

Every year we take time to improve our instructional practices, programming and curriculum. This year there were three things we focused most of our attention on when it comes to curriculum and instruction and that was professional development around the science of reading, developing a scope and sequence for outdoor learning, and developing a scope and sequence for math connected to district math promise standards. For the science of reading professional development, teachers and administration went through a thorough training on the science of reading provided by partnership between CESA 9, Cox Campus and Northland Pines. This took the entire school year but staff are now better equipped with knowledge and experience in how to best teach literacy. The outdoor learning scope and sequence began in the summer of 2023 but staff continued to work on it throughout the school year and will continue to modify it going forward. The purpose of this is to get classrooms using the outdoor learning environment more frequently and purposefully and connect the learning to science standards. Lastly, teachers took part in district curriculum work in which they learned about the updated math standards and identified the promise standards for mathematics in each grade level. During the summer of 2024 NPMLC staff then took these promise standards and developed a scope and sequence connecting the concepts to Montessori materials. This ensures Montessori students are learning the same math concepts as the rest of the district but they may learn them in a different order and in a little different way. We are always looking for the balance between staying true to Montessori methodology and ensuring students have a rigorous education that allows them to show their knowledge on standardized tests.

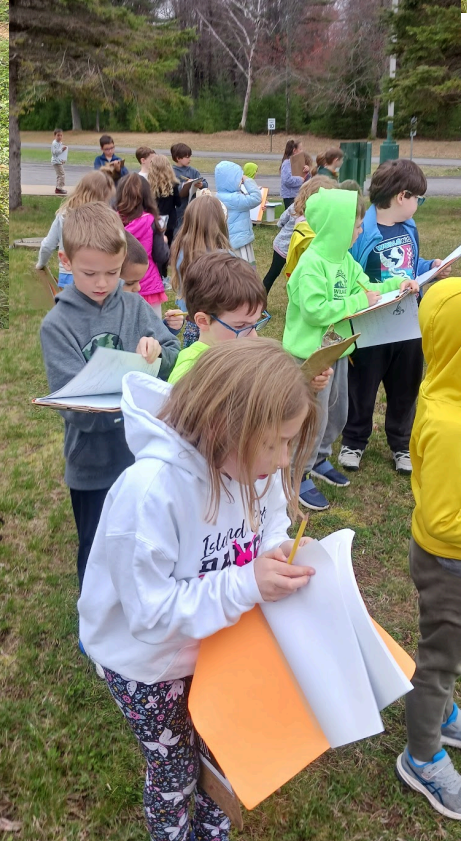
The staff have done a lot of work in improving curriculum and programming at NPMLC and it shows in students data. According to STAR data 96% of our students are proficient in math and over 80% are proficient in literacy. Staff have done a great job but we will continue with school improvement efforts. For the 2024-2025 school year staff will continue to work on the math scope and sequence, continue professional development on the science of reading and we plan to update our school report cards for the 2025-2026 school year. We look forward to the work ahead and continued improvement.





## Community and Outdoor Education

Teaching citizenship and environmental education are key ingredients of Montessori education. Students' education is not limited by the four walls of the classroom, but their classroom extends into the outdoors and community as well. At NPMLC we have always valued environmental education and bringing students into the outdoors and bringing the outdoors into the classroom. Last summer St. Germain and Montessori staff collaborated in creating an outdoor learning scope and sequence that will help staff maximize the use of outdoor learning resources such as our pond, trail system, gardens and more. This is a living document that staff continue to update and improve and it is helping classrooms use outdoor learning experiences in a purposeful way by connecting it to the standards. Below you see students doing outdoor journaling, harvesting our fall crops, enjoying lunch over a campfire and viewing the solar eclipse. Just a few examples of the many great outdoor learning experiences for students.





## Community and Family Engagement

Engaging families and the community in student learning is an essential part of NPMLC. There are a variety of ways this is accomplished. Engaging families starts with parent communication. Staff send weekly newsletters to families explaining what is being learned in the classroom. We also have parent-teacher conferences and numerous family events. We average about one family event per month that range from family hikes, to a Science Fair, to a Family Friendship Night (dancing with a DJ), to movie night to a Family Reading Night. These events and others help foster a sense of community and get parents involved with their children's education. We have amazing families that are very involved. We also work with the community in a variety of ways. We work with the Vilas County Sheriff's Department and Plum Lake Ambulance for a reading program, we bring in local environmental education groups for programming, and much more. We have a positive school community and tremendous support from families and our community.





## Fundraising and Grants

This is the second year that NPMLC has partnered with the St. Germain Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) to make one united PTO. This allows for more collaboration and connections between the staff and families of both schools. It also creates unity in fundraising. The two schools have two main fundraisers a year. The main one is the wreath fundraiser completed in October and the second one is a bake sale at our annual Spring Fling. In addition to this we have a generous community and we get donations from local churches, businesses and organizations to support students in financial hardships and to support student learning. Next year we are looking to add one more fundraiser because this will be the last year NPMLC has left over funds from a stipend the school received for being a Mentor School for three years. When NPMLC was a mentor school it helped other charter schools get started and the state paid our school for our time and services. These funds have been used for NPMLC field trips and student activities for the past five years but since there are no longer mentor school programs and funding available NPMLC has to find another source of funding. Partnering with the St. Germain PTO creates a sustainable way of raising funds for field trips and activities and it benefits St. Germain and Montessori schools because there are more families to draw funds and volunteers from.

## Parent Survey

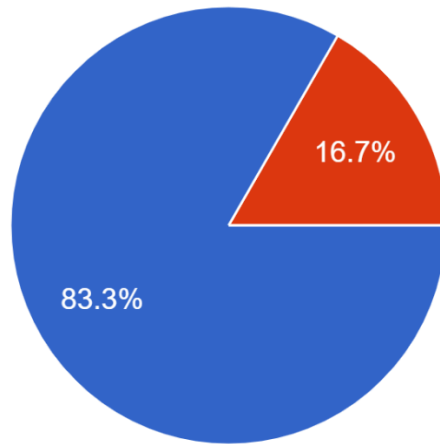
Every year NPMLC sends home an anonymous electronic survey to check for parent satisfaction, see what we are doing well and to gain insights on what we can do to get better. Typically we use a simple Google Form. There were many positives from the survey and like always things we can learn from. Below are some data charts showing the results but it is pleasing to see that 100% of the parents that took the survey are satisfied with the school and their children are too. This data indicates that overall families and students are satisfied with the school but there are areas for improvement as well.

There were many positive comments about staff, the school, and how warm, nurturing and caring the school is and how it is reaching the needs of each individual. The survey also asked what we can do to improve. The most common area that was suggested for improvements is sharing more information about Montessori methodology and how it is being used in the school and how parents can support it at home. We will look for ways we can do this more next school year. There were also a few comments about limiting the use of technology in the classrooms. NPMLC does use less technology than most classrooms but most definitely something we can look into.



## How satisfied is your child with NPMLC?

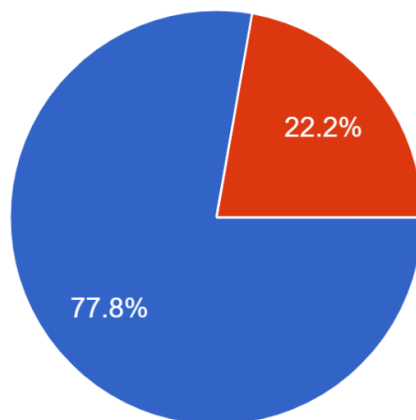
18 responses



- Extremely Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Unsatisfied
- Extremely Unsatisfied

## What is your level of satisfaction with NPMLC?

18 responses



- Extremely Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Unsatisfied
- Extremely Unsatisfied

## 2023-2024 School Year Summary

The 2023-2024 school year was a great success! After reflecting upon our ninth year it is amazing to see the growth our school has made since its first year. NPMLC is at capacity in most grade levels and has a well established waiting list. Our parent survey indicates parents are very satisfied with the school, staff, and their children's learning. We have not only created amazing outdoor learning resources for classrooms but we have also developed programming around them to maximize its use. After attendance rates being a concern the past few years it has rebounded, we are above the state average and it has improved over the past two years. We have developed great family and student activities and partnering with the St. Germain PTO ensures that these activities will be continued for years to come. These are all important things but most importantly student data shows that our students are learning and performing at a very high level. This shows that all of the hard work put into curriculum, programming, professional development and more is paying off and students are learning at a high level. Even though NPMLC is in a great place and it was a fantastic school year, our work is not done yet. For this upcoming school year we want to continue working on our math scope and sequence. Staff will continue to learn about the science of reading and by next summer we plan to have a framework developed that outlines our literacy programming. Another goal is to update our school report cards by the 2025-2026 school year to be more parent friendly and to make them better depict what students are learning in the classroom. Over the past nine years standards have changed, we have shifted our instructional focus to certain learning outcomes and this needs to be updated on our school report cards. We look forward to another great school year in 2024-2025!

*Below is our district mission statement and the core values that St. Germain Elementary and Northland Pines Montessori Learning Center staff identified and created.*

**NP**

**The Northland Pines community guarantees rigor, relevance, and relationships to prepare all learners for life.**

RELATIONSHIPS	HIGH EXPECTATIONS	ATTITUDE	COLLABORATION	INNOVATION
We will cultivate relationships by creating a positive atmosphere through connections that are meaningful, compassionate and develop a genuine understanding of ALL.	We are dedicated to rigorous yet achievable goals to ensure ALL students and staff reach their full potential.	We will maintain a positive outlook by encouraging continuous improvement to achieve our greatest potential.	We will work as a professional learning community to support our students, staff, and families to ensure continuous improvement.	We will be flexible and creative as we provide rigorous, engaging and relevant experiences that meet the changing needs of ALL learners.

**ALL staff BELIEVE in ALL students**