



James C. Wright Middle School
 Term Report 2011-2016
 Executive Summary - December 2015

Overview of Current Term

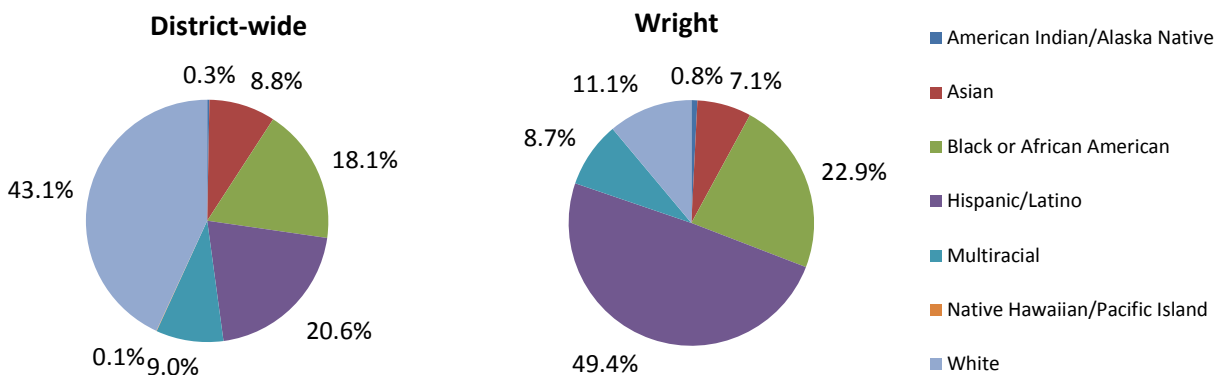
James C. Wright Middle School (Wright) was founded to successfully educate all students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to participate fully in an evolving global society. The school was created to be a pioneer in the use of thematic integrated and multi-cultural curricula as a way of connecting with the lives of its students, to be MMSD’s technology showcase school, and to be a forerunner in engaging the community in the education of its children.

Wright was the first Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) school granted charter status in 1994; it is an instrumentality of MMSD. Today, Wright is requesting a one-year extension of its charter school contract with the intention to engage in a long-term strategic planning process to set the stage for the next five years. The planning process next year will focus on: reestablishing a functioning governance council, maintaining enrollment at capacity, continuing integration of social action into instruction, and continuing an extensive network of partnerships. Wright will then request consideration of a five-year renewal for the term 2017-2022.

Membership on the current governance council consists of three parents, two community members, the Wright principal, and two staff members--currently the social worker and learning coordinator.

253 students currently attend Wright; maximum capacity of the school facility is 255. Current average attendance is 95.8% (MMSD 94.7%).

Students by Race/Ethnicity 2015-2016

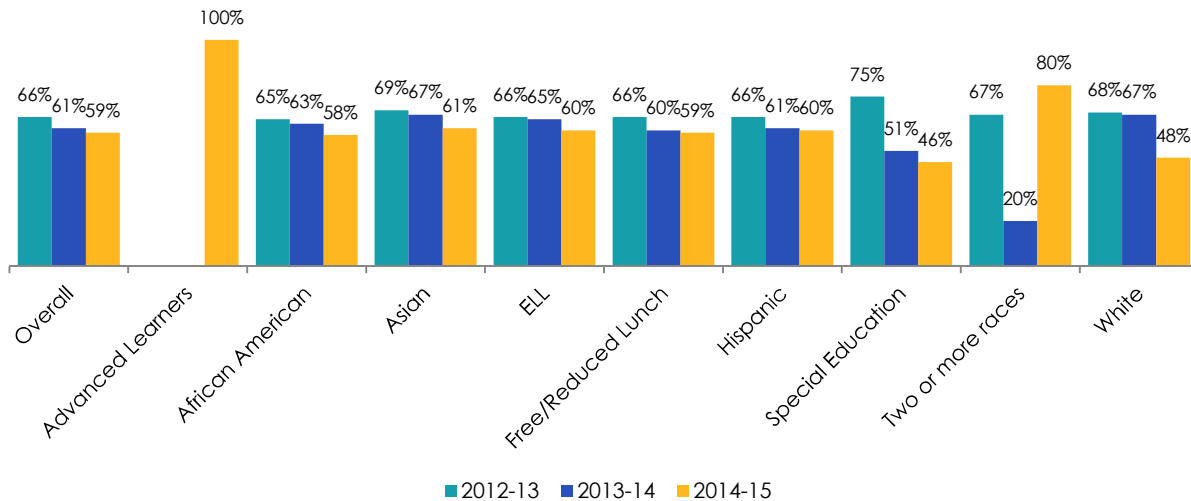


	SPED	ELL	Low-Income
District	13.9%	27.3%	46.8%
Wright	17%	53.8%	86.2%

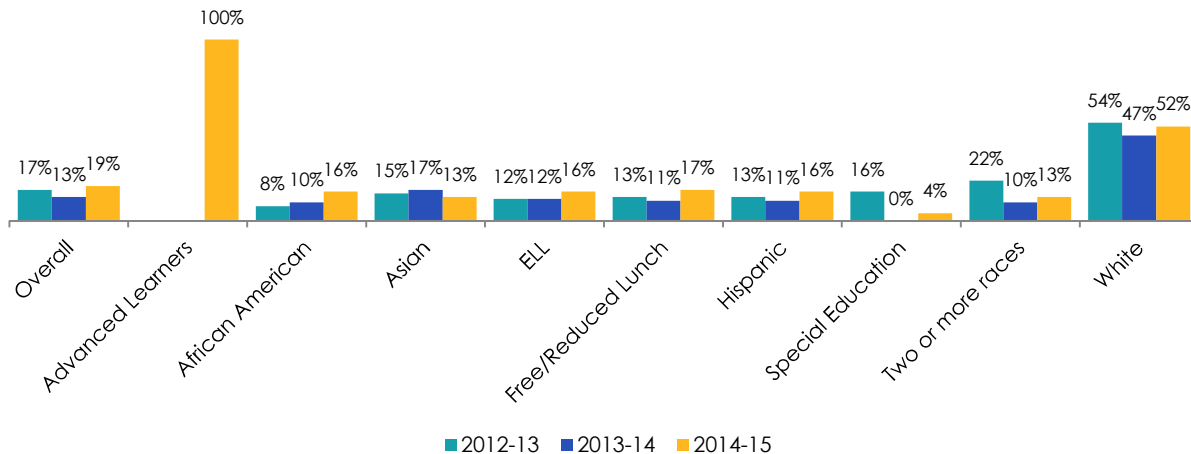
Student Achievement

The first goal in the district’s Strategic Framework is for every student to be on-track to graduate as measured by key milestones which include proficiency and growth in literacy and mathematics as measured by MAP. While Wright showed some decline in the percent of students meeting MAP reading growth targets from 2012-2015, they are still above the national average and for almost all student groups. While improvement in reading proficiency has been incremental overall, there has been a more positive trajectory for African American students, which is a focus group for the school.

Wright MAP Reading Growth

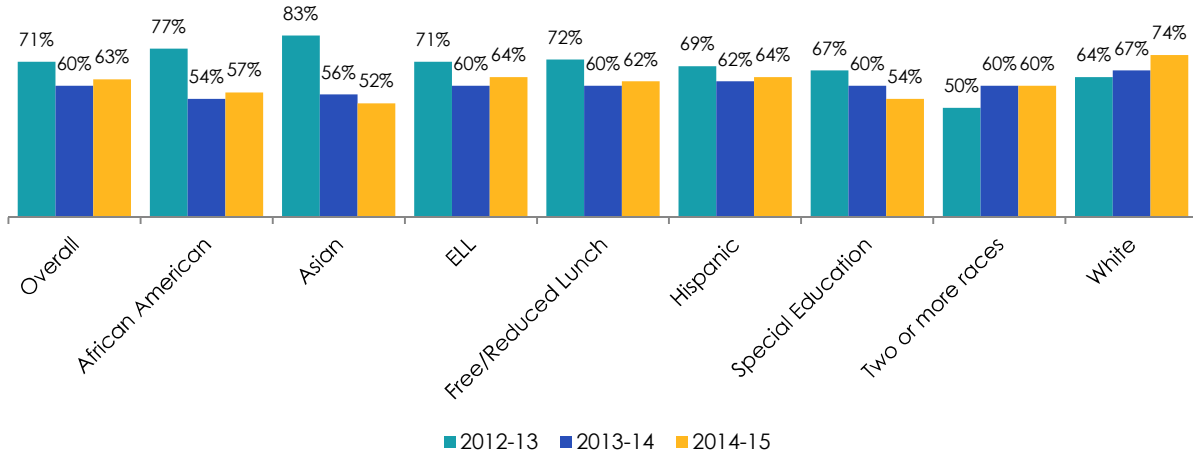


Wright MAP Reading Proficiency

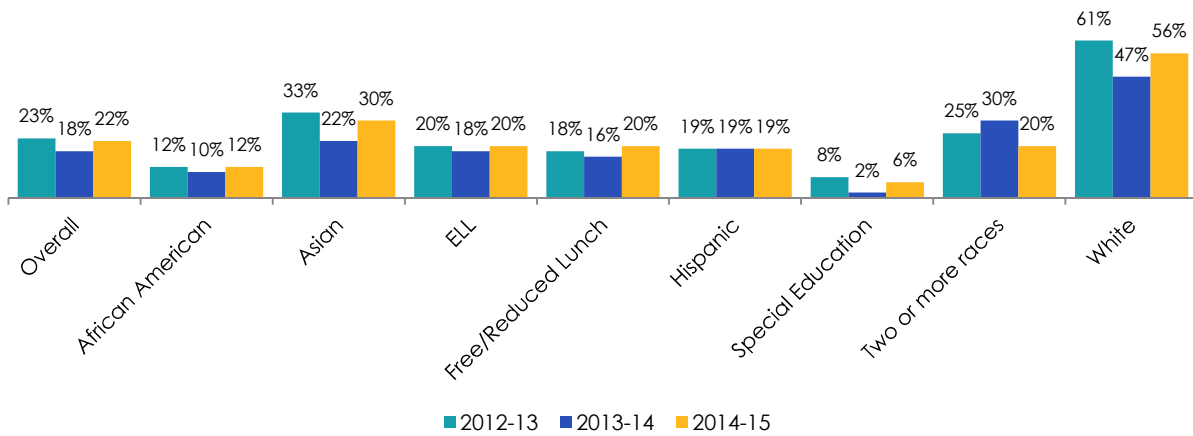


The trends in MAP math growth 2012-2015 varied but the school is above the national average and for most student groups. Trends for MAP proficiency across subgroups did not change significantly from 2012-2015; it is mostly flat or slightly down.

Wright MAP Math Growth

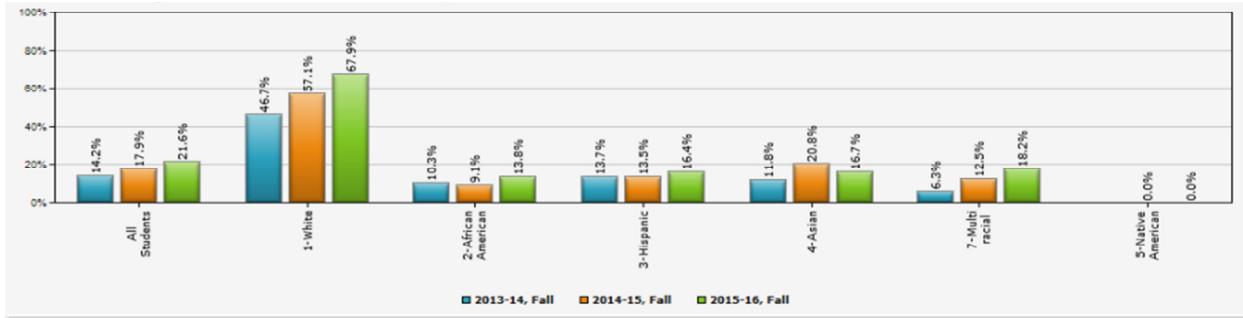


Wright MAP Math Proficiency



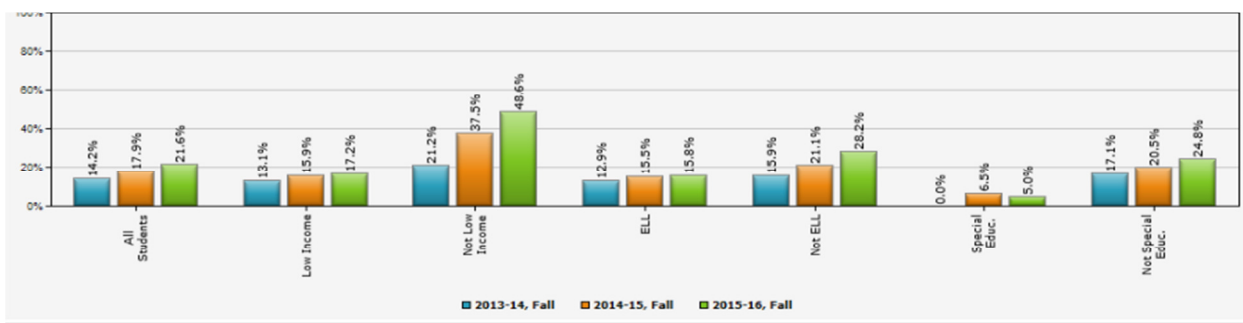
Wright examined students' academic progress in comparison to the national average MAP reading RIT score. Graph 1 shows that overall and in all but one racial/ethnic groups for the past three years, an increasing percentage of Wright students outpace the national average MAP reading RIT score.

Graph 1. MAP – Percent of students at or above national average MAP RIT score by race/ethnicity



Graph 2 shows that overall and among economically disadvantaged students, an increasing percentage of Wright students outpace the national average for the past three years. Sixteen percent (16%) of Wright's ELL students have met or surpassed the national average MAP RIT score in the last two years, while Wright's students with identified disabilities showed a decrease (from 7% to 5%) in the percentage of students at or above the national average MAP RIT score.

Graph 2. MAP – Percent of students at or above national average MAP RIT score by subgroup



Educational Program

Wright's mission is to successfully educate all students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to participate fully in an evolving global society. Wright endeavors to provide students with a middle school characterized by (a) a multicultural, academically focused learning environment that is integrated into the fabric of the South Madison community; (b) social action, social responsibility and

self advocacy infused explicitly and implicitly into the curriculum; (c) a professional development school that engages teachers and other staff in a reflective and collaborative approach to teaching and learning of best practices; and, (d) parent, student, and staff involvement in decision making.

Wright's belief in the importance of engaging families and integrating the assets and resources of South Madison with teaching and learning stems from two research-based models: Joyce Epstein's (1997) Six Types of Involvement and Schultz's (2006) Funds of Knowledge. Epstein's model emphasizes the importance of connections between the school, family, and community and posits that all three spheres intersect and affect students' success. When schools, parents, families, and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer, and enroll in higher level programs. Funds of Knowledge holds that parents and students have knowledge that often, as a school, we miss recognizing and leveraging. It encourages teachers to bring the richness of families' community-based "resources, including knowledge skills and labor, that enhance the households' ability to survive and thrive" (Gonzalez, Moll, Floyd-Tenery, Amanti, Gonzalez, 1993) into the classroom, forming curriculum units that tap into students' households' funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 1993), placing them on an equal level with more traditional school knowledge and using these familiar forms of knowledge to more effectively scaffold students into understandings of school knowledge" (Schutz, 2006). Wright has an extensive network of South Madison community support that includes partnering coming into the school to provide support and services (e.g., Urban League, Centro Hispano, Boys & Girls Club of Dane County, YWCA, Nehemiah Corporation) and less formal relationships. For example, 100 Black Men of Madison, Inc. share resources, expertise and mentors when needed. As another example, Blackhawk Church donates school supplies and assists with teacher appreciation activities.

Wright defines social action as "all the activities in which people act in ways that will benefit not only themselves as individuals, but also the larger communities of which they are members" (Snyder & Omoto, 2007). When students' learning community includes a focus on social action, it empowers them to see themselves as an active agent in all aspects of their lives and build leadership skills. Wright students are challenged to apply content knowledge from the classroom via social action to real-world problems through community service and volunteering. Social action helps youth move past a basic understanding of community problems to critically analyzing underlying community issues, helping youth understand root causes and potential solutions (Foster-Fisherman, Law, Lichty, Aoun, 2010). In addition, research shows that youth participating in social action were shown to have increased self esteem, increased connectedness to their community, empowerment, and increased academic performance. (Fehrman and Schutz, 2011)

Wright's status as a past UW Professional Development School (PDS) and continuing Partner School Network (PSN) school has improved the overall quality of education at Wright by creating a school-wide professional learning community that includes both practicing and pre-service teachers and other staff members. The entire school community benefits when a school places inquiry and reflection at the heart of child and adult activity: students engage in high quality education, practicing teachers engage in self-study and improvement, new teachers join an already-established professional learning community,

student teachers work with staff members who blend inquiry and application into daily teaching and learning, and learning forms the basis for school problem-solving and action. In the words of Judi Randi and Kenneth Zeichner, “In the end, the quality of education that will be available in our public schools will depend on the quality of professional learning opportunities available to teachers” (Randi and Zeichner, 2004).

Through PSN, student teachers, Wright teachers, and UW-Madison staff members works collaboratively to provide high quality curriculum and instruction. There is a strong base of research and practice behind the PDS model as described by the Holmes Partnership, the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teachers (NCREST), and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). As a member of the PDS network, Wright is part of the Holmes Partnership and its urban network UNITE (*Urban Network to Improve Teacher Education*).

Parents have opportunities to be involved in decision making through attendance at school events where they learn about the School Improvement Plan and provide input through surveys and involvement in Wright's parent group where they have a forum to express their needs. Like all schools, parents are consulted in meeting their child's individual needs. Parent representatives are members of Wright's governance council. Staff are involved in decision making through teacher instructional teams and content cadres. Teacher leaders that represent different populations of our staff serve on the School Based Leadership Team (SBLT), participate in decision making, and provide two-way communication between the SBLT and other staff. Staff are occasionally involved in open forums, surveys, or exit slips to express needs and ideas. Students at Wright are frequently brought into decision making that affects them as individuals. As leaders of fall student led conferences with parents and teachers, they share and develop goals and plans with their parent(s)/guardian(s) and teachers. Creating a Respectful Environment at Wright (CREW) members are active in decisions about community building activities. Their input and opinions are sought and considered regarding school-wide initiatives and areas of concern.

What do the Wright vision and desired attributes look like in action? TEAM (Teens Education and Mentoring) Wright was created to provide students with leadership opportunities and to increase their knowledge of community issues and help guide them in being proactive around those issues. Team Wright was a class offered as an elective to 8th grade students. In the past, these students have partnered and become mentors to surrounding elementary school students. Because mentoring elementary students involved missing time from academics, this class was replaced in 2013 with a Social Issues class for 8th grade. Students are encouraged to apply what they have learned about social action at Wright to community issues.

This past semester students researched and brought in speakers on racial disparities, the school to prison pipeline, achievement gap, how choices and decisions affect us, high school/college success, mentors, and goals. Social Issues classes have become a part of the specials classes rotation in all grades since 2014-2015. In 6th grade, students wrote letters to different organizations asking for donations to fill a coat room. Students use what they learned in social action and take it into their community.

Students learn restorative justice practices and gain a deeper understanding of (Citizenship, Leadership, Equity, Achievement, Relationships) CLEAR values to be leaders in the building. Students read different novels based on social emotional issues (e.g., Wonder by R. J. Palacio). In 7th grade Social Action will have a main focus on restorative justice with 7th grade students being trained as circle keepers. Students learn what social action and social activists are. They research Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez and determine why they are social activists, then research a social activist of their choosing. Through current events and articles they learn about immigration trends throughout the world and then about immigration to the U.S. During the semester, they read La Linea and “The Train of Death” from Reporting Live book.

Social action is embedded into academics as follows:

Language Arts - 6th/7th grade Language Arts focuses on identity of self. With personal narratives and the creation of mandalas, students first have to define self and know their passions. They further use various literature to discuss community and restorative justice, like “Touching Spirit Bear.” By researching the justice system, students analyze the inequalities in law enforcement and racial disparities within the system. 8th grade Language Arts focuses on the idea of personal strength, the use of power (to help or hurt others), and analyzing literary devices in newspaper articles to uncover bias in the news.

Science- In relation to Language Arts discussion of community and the effects of working together as a whole, 6th grade Science classes take action in growing a classroom garden. The unit focuses on the idea of community and how producing your own food can be healthier and may allow you to save money. In 2012-2014, a staff member took the process further as the students planted their garden outside and tended to them. These students took the vegetables and fruits they grew and made healthy snacks and meals.

7th and 8th grade Science carry out units on our role in global climate change and steps citizens can take to curb the emissions that are produced by human life. These units make the students aware of how their actions can influence the world. Classes further brainstorm actions they can take to lower the “footprint” they make on the world.

Social Studies - From occasional large-scale projects like petitioning for stoplights to more organic and timely integrations like rock the vote initiative, Social Studies classes use a social justice lens on curriculum. 6th grade Social Studies notes the injustices in ancient civilization; from unequal power in Egypt to the development of a fair government in Greece, teachers take time to discuss the connections between ancient history and today. 7th grade Social Studies focuses on various topics related to social action and social justice including immigration, spatial inequality, and environmental pollution in the Great Lakes, specifically Lake Michigan. In the immigration unit, something that is very personal and relevant for Wright’s students, they dive into different informational texts that offer various perspectives and discuss bias and validity. 8th grade, students research policies that control immigration or affect immigrant students such as the Dream Act. They further study said policies being passed and/or vetoed. Students spend a lot of time focusing on the decision making process within history.

Changes in history are made when activists stand up and speak out. When injustices are present, who stood up? Why did they speak out? How did they persuade the public to stand on their side? Students also study the Constitution and the Bill of Rights through the lens of social justice to understand how these historic documents were created and how they have been used as the basis for bringing about social change.

Operations

Wright Middle School is housed at the MMSD-owned facility at 1717 Fish Hatchery Road, Madison, Wisconsin. The building is a two story facility with 13 classrooms, a Library, a computer lab, an art room, gym/cafeteria, a music room, main office, and support services areas.

The minimum number of students that may be enrolled at Wright is 180; the maximum number is 255. School year 15/16, enrollment is at 253. The school has remained at or near capacity since 2011/12. The grade levels that are served are 6-7-8. Students attending an elementary feeder school in the West High School attendance area are recruited to apply for 6th grade enrollment at Wright. If more than 85 applicants for attendance at Wright, a lottery is conducted among the applicants. No student may be required to attend Wright; all placements are by mutual consent of the student's parent/guardian, the student, and Wright. The recruitment of students residing within the West High School attendance area is the means by which Wright will attempt to achieve a racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and special education balance among its pupils that is reflective of MMSD, to the extent possible.

Wright Enrollment Trends

	Year	Am. Indian /Alaska Native	Asian	African American	Hispanic	Multiracial	White	Special Education	ELL	Low Income	Total #
District	2015-16	0.3%	8.9%	17.8%	20.5%	9.1%	43.2%	13.9%	27.4%	46.7%	
Wright	2015-16	0.8%	7.0%	22.7%	50.0%	8.6%	10.9%	17.6%	54.3%	86.3%	256
District	2014-15	0.4%	9.1%	17.8%	20.0%	9.0%	43.7%	14.6%	26.6%	48.1%	
Wright	2014-15	0.8%	9.4%	22.4%	50.2%	6.3%	11.0%	20.0%	56.9%	90.6%	255
District	2013-14	0.4%	9.1%	18.1%	19.4%	8.8%	44.0%	12.8%	26.1%	48.2%	
Wright	2013-14	0.0%	6.7%	28.2%	52.9%	6.3%	5.9%	19.2%	56.1%	87.1%	255
District	2012-13	0.4%	9.1%	18.2%	18.9%	8.8%	44.6%	13.6%	24.7%	48.1%	
Wright	2012-13	0.4%	5.6%	26.9%	49.8%	5.2%	12.0%	23.7%	52.2%	85.5%	249
District	2011-12	0.4%	9.3%	19.0%	18.2%	8.4%	44.6%	14.1%	23.9%	48.4%	
Wright	2011-12	0.8%	5.2%	31.1%	47.8%	5.6%	9.6%	23.9%	50.6%	86.5%	251

In accordance with the charter agreement, and state law regarding instrumentality charter schools, Wright follows all MMSD health and safety policies and procedures, including any new or revised policies developed during the term of the charter. Wright has developed a school -specific safety plan with response procedures for fire, extreme weather, lock-down, and evacuations in accordance with MMSD guidelines and requirements. Wright faculty and staff are hired through the MMSD Human Resources infrastructure.

Future Plans (2016-17)

Wright intends to continue making progress toward fulfilling its mission: to successfully educate all students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to participate fully in an evolving global society.

Student Achievement

Wright will demonstrate progress towards meeting goals for student growth and proficiency in reading and math as specified in the 2015-2016 SIP (see below).

2015-2016 SIP goal (% increase from 2014-2015)	All students	Focus group African American	Focus group English Language Learners
MAP reading growth fall to spring	64% (+5%)	62% (+5%)	65% (+5%)
MAP reading proficiency	24% (+5%)	20% (+5%)	21% (+5%)
MAP math growth fall to spring	65% (+2%)	62% (+5%)	66% (+2%)
MAP math proficiency	27% (+5%)	17% (+5%)	25% (+5%)

Educational Program

During the 2016-2017 term, Wright expects to continue infusing social action into the curriculum, continue to strengthen partnerships with South Madison and other community organization, and actively teach CLEAR values, self-advocacy, goal setting, and concern for community. Through School Improvement (SIP) planning and strengthening Wright’s relationship with the University of Wisconsin - Madison, the school will continue to engage in strong staff development and improve professional collaboration. Wright will continue to evolve in our understanding of social action and community involvement and will work to increase parent involvement in the school. The focus and flexibility provided by the charter keeps the school consistent in its mission despite natural staff turnover.

Governance

The council has struggled over recent years to maintain active membership, and there are many areas in which to improve. After minimal participation in years preceding, the governance council has met three times since the spring, kept minutes, and maintained communication with its members. The council now has a calendar of meetings, documented meeting notes, a leadership team that meets monthly, roles, and has recruited new members.

Going into the strategic planning process, Wright knows that it will be critical to understand the requirements of charter school law regarding autonomy, flexibility, accountability, and governance council authority and roles. With that understanding, Wright will develop an action plan to ensure that Wright thrives and continues to successfully serve students and families.

Operations

All operations will continue as stated above. Business and support services are provided by MMSD. There are no specific federal or state statutes/regulations or district policies/procedures from which Wright will be exempt. In addition to annual base funding from the district, Wright is considering development of a 501c3 entity to allow for an annual stream of charitable contributions to the school to support operations in future years. Wright will continue to collaborate with its key partners and to apply for grants that support and improve the educational program, instructional methods, and partnerships implementation.