



Charter School Review Committee

**W. Martin Morics, CPA**  
City Comptroller, *Ex Officio*

**Dr. Jeanette Mitchell**  
Chair

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Committee Members

January 6, 2015

Mr. David Chief  
Principal, Milwaukee Math and Science Academy  
110 West Burleigh Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Mr. Serdar Bozdag, PhD.  
President of the Board of Directors, MMSA  
3910 W. Jerelin Dr.  
Franklin, WI 53132

Dear Mr. Chief and Mr. Bozdag,

On November 18, 2014, the Charter School Review Committee (CSRC) received and accepted the Milwaukee Math and Science Academy (MMSA) 2013–14 *Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance* report from the Children’s Research Center (CRC). That report included a recommendation that the CSRC consider placing MMSA on probation with requirements to address concerns. The concerns included the school’s instability (drop in student return rate, change in principal each year, and poor teacher return rate), the lack of teacher licenses or permits, and the slow academic progress of the students.

At its meeting on December 16, 2014, the CSRC considered the particular concerns and made the decision to place MMSA on probation with specific conditions.

Specifically, CSRC is concerned about the following issues:

- The student return rate declined from 75.7% in the fall of 2012 to 71.6% in the fall of 2013.
- The school has had three principals during its three years of operation.
- The instructional staff return rate declined from 76.9% in the fall of 2012 to 31.6% in the fall of 2013.
- Three instructional staff (a third-grade teacher, a foreign language teacher, and the computer lab teacher) did not hold valid Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) licenses or permits for the 2013–14 school year.

- In the fall of 2013, 64.7% of the students who were proficient or advanced in math the prior year maintained proficiency, falling short of CSRC's 75% expectation.
- For two years in a row, fourth- through seventh-grade students who were below proficiency on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) reading and/or math subtests the previous year did not meet the CSRC expectation that at least 60% of these students progress either one quartile or one proficiency level.

<b>MMSA</b> <b>WKCE Year-to-Year Progress</b> <b>Students Who Were Minimal or Basic and Showed Improvement</b> <b>Based on Former Proficiency-Level Cut Scores*</b> <b>4th Through 7th Grades</b>		
<b>School Year</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Math</b>
2012-13	51.5%	47.6%
2013-14	59.0%	50.0%

\*In 2012-13, the state began using revised National Assessment of Educational Progress-based cut scores; the former cut scores were applied to the 2012-13 data in order to examine progress from 2012-13 to 2013-14.

The CSRC is placing MMSA on probation with the following conditions:

1. Improve the stability of the school's leadership by maintaining at least 80% of current administrative and board leadership through the 2014-15 academic year. MMSA's current administrative leadership includes the principal, an instructional coordinator, and two deans of students. The board of directors currently consists of four members.
2. Increase total points earned for engagement indicators on the scorecard in 2014-15. The total points earned in 2013-14 for these indicators was 17.6, or 70.4% of the possible 25 points in this area.
3. Meet the CSRC expectation that at least 75% of the first graders who met the summed score benchmark on the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening in the spring will remain at or above the second grade summed score benchmark in the spring of the subsequent year. In the spring of 2015, at least 75% of the second-grade students who met the benchmark in the spring of 2014 as first graders will be expected to again meet their benchmark.
4. Ensure that all instructional staff hold DPI instruction licenses or permits for each year of operation.
5. Submit a written explanation, including specific actions taken, to CRC by January 30, 2015, addressing the progress the school has made toward the recommendations for school improvement listed in the 2013-14 *Programmatic Profile and Educational Performance* report. Specifically, this includes the following.
  - Focus on reading development by:

- » Establishing a summer reading program for students in K5 through fourth grades who are behind in reading;
  - » Revising the reading curriculum to focus more on reading, especially in the younger grades; and
  - » Hiring extra help to support the reading program.
- Implement strategies to increase student attendance, retention, and return rates.
  - Continue to provide enrichment opportunities for students who are functioning above grade level.
  - Improve methods of tracking the license/certification of teachers.
  - Develop strategies to retain teachers throughout the school year and encourage teachers to return year after year.

Being placed on probation may result in an increased level of monitoring by the CSRC monitors. The cost of additional monitoring shall be borne by MMSA.

At the end of the 2014-15 school year, the CSRC will review and assess the extent to which MMSA has addressed and improved the school's overall engagement indicators, student academic progress, and stability of the school's leadership. At that time, the CSRC will determine whether to continue the school's probationary status, end the school's probationary status, or revoke the city's charter and terminate the city's contract with MMSA.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jeanette Mitchell  
Chair, Charter School Review Committee