



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

CHARTER SCHOOL REVIEW COMMITTEE

KEVIN INGRAM, CHAIR
Zaynab Baalbaki, Vice-Chair

**Bill Christianson, Catina Harwell-Young and Dr. Terri
Brookshire**

Staff Assistant: Linda Elmer, (414) 286-2231
Fax: 286-3456, lelmer@milwaukee.gov
Legislative Liaison, Alex Highley, 414-286-8661,
Alex.Highley@milwaukee.gov
Gayle Peay, 288-1540

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

5:00 PM

Virtual

Please join this meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
<https://meet.goto.com/923122061>

You can also dial in using your phone.
Access Code: 923-122-061
United States: +1 (408) 650-3123

1. Roll call.

Meeting convened: 5:03 PM
Members present: Kevin Ingram, Bill Christianson, Zaynab Baalbaki, Dr. Terri Brookshire, Catina Harwell-Young (5:30 PM)
Member excused: Dr. Desiree Pointer-Mace

2. Review and approval of the minutes of the October 30, 2024 meeting.

Mr. Christianson moved approval of the minutes. There were no objections.

3. [230156](#)

Communication relating to administrative matters of the Charter School Review Committee for the 2023-25 school years.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Dr. Azra Baylor went through the proposed changes for the Evident Change contract, what data will be collected and that there will be two school visits as part of the contract. She went through what services Evident Change will be providing. The contract renewal is for a one-year term. Evident Change will also provide support to the CSRC. There is a group of staff working for Evident Change, it is not just her. Members had no questions. The chair commended her for her support with the presentation before the Steering and Rules Committee.
Mr. Christianson moved, seconded by Ms. Baalbaki, for approval of the 2025-26

contract renewal with Evident Change. There were no objections.

Ms. Gayle Peay said the Institute for the Transformation of Learning contract will include administrative oversight and act as a liaison with other governmental entities as well as supporting training and educational efforts by CSRC and school board members. They are continually working on making the processes simpler and more transparent. Mr. Ingram thanked Ms. Peay for the positive role serving as a liaison with the city and for her financial oversight. He also thanked her for serving at the state charter school meetings and all her work behind-the-scenes. Members had no questions.

Mr. Christianson moved, seconded by Ms Baalbaki, for approval of the 2025-26 contract renewal with the Institute for the Transformation of Learning. There were no objections.

Mr. Rupesh Gupta from ML Tharps presented the financial reports for each school.

Downtown Montessori Academy - it just completed its 26th year of operation and had revenue of \$3.4 million. The charter funding went up \$2100 per student compared to prior years. Salary and benefits were the biggest increased costs to the school. Their year-end cash position is solid. The audit was completed on time and most reporting requirements were met, with a couple monthly reports late; extensions were requested and granted. The school has a solid financial system and is in excellent financial condition and appears to be in compliance with its city contract requirements. Their financial scorecard improved from last year.

Central City Cyberschool - it just completed its 25th year of operation and its revenue increased by \$1.4 million while their operating expenses decreased, including its salary and benefits costs. Their student enrollment decreased slightly. They had a year-end cash balance of almost \$2 million. The audit was completed on time and the school was in compliance with all the report requirements, although a few monthly reports were provided late. The school is in excellent financial condition and is in compliance with its city contract requirements. Their financial scorecard reflects their excellent financial condition.

Mr. Christianson asked, if in general, the schools will need to tighten their belts due to a decrease in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding. The schools have adjusted their budgets for 2024-25 and they all seem to be following their budgets.

Mr. Ingram asked if Mr. Gupta knows why per-pupil costs decreased rather than increased, which is more typical. Mr. Gupta said operating costs seemed to have decreased and salary/benefits also were lower.

DL Hines - it just completed its 22nd year of operation; it's revenues decreased by \$125,000 due to a decrease in ESSER funding. They have a cash balance of \$1.8 million. The audit was completed on time and there were no issues to any on-going concerns and they complied with all city reporting requirements in a timely manner. The school has solid procedures in place and is compliant with the city of Milwaukee requirements. The financial scorecard reflects the excellent financial health of the school.

Mr. Ingram noted that the Dept. of Public Instruction annually reviews the per-pupil charter funding, which has been increasing each year.

Milwaukee Academy of Science - it just completed its 24th year of operation and has a

surplus of \$6.5 million and had an increase in revenue primarily due to the increase in per-pupil charter funds. The year-end cash balance is \$6.8 million. The school did have increased repair and maintenance costs and a loan balance of \$9.2 million, which they are re-paying. The audit was submitted late (by December 12th). There were some audit issues and the auditor recommended timely filing of assets and liabilities; part of the issues were caused by a small staff size and change in key personnel. ML Tharp will monitor the school to ensure its cash reconciliations are done timely. The school met all city reporting requirements in a timely manner. The school is in excellent financial position and appears to be in contract compliance with the city. The financial scorecard is lower due to the internal control issues. ML Tharps will amend the report to write out what R&R stands for as the chair had never seen that before. ML Tharps will be ensuring that the bank reconciliation done monthly is done properly, which is half the battle. Mr. Gupta believes the school will be hiring a couple more people in the accounting department, which will help.

Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy - it just completed its 13th year of operation and gained almost \$4.5 million in a year, although revenue was down from the prior year (which was higher due to a one-time donated building that year). Student enrollment decreased by about 20 students. Their current liabilities increased by about \$10 million, primarily related to construction of the new building. The audit was completed late due to management turnover, but the auditor had no issues and the school complied with the city's reporting requirements (with one monthly report being late). The school is in excellent financial position and appears to be in compliance with city contract requirements. The financial scorecard reflects their excellent financial position, with a slightly lower score due to the audit being completed late and a couple points were docked for the school's lack of internal controls.

Milwaukee Math and Science Academy - it just completed its 13th year and shows \$200,000 in surplus. They decreased expenses by about \$28,000. The annual audit was completed on time with no issues or concerns. The school corrected an auditing concern from the prior year and complied with the city reporting requirements. The school continues to be in a good financial position and appears to be in compliance with city reporting requirements. The financial scorecard improved a little from the prior year. The chair also asked what CFDA stands for (relates to a specific federal grant).

Escuela Verde -- it just completed its 12th year of operation and achieved good financial standing. Expenses are consistent with prior years and student enrollment remained basically the same. The school is part of the Transcenter for Youth. The annual audit was completed on time with no issues or concerns. The school appears to be in compliance with city reporting requirements. The school and the Transcenter for Youth are both in good financial conditions and the financial scorecard reflects that.

Mr. Gupta would like to amend the reports slightly to add a table so it's easier for members to review. The chair agreed and asks that the CSRC review a draft. Mr. Gupta also asked about reporting students as FTEs versus just numbers; the chair agreed to do a draft and see which would be easier to understand. Those draft changes will be made next year.

Mr. Christianson asked if it would make sense to provide a breakdown of sources of revenue for each school. He would like to see how much the schools are relying on one-time revenue (such as ESSER) for on-going expenses. He would like grants broken down by on-going vs. one-time grants as an example. Ms. Baalbaki also

supported that change. Mr. Gupta said they could categorize revenue into 3-4 categories and do that next year. Ms. Baalbaki asked if that could also be done for expenses to see a whole picture of the school. Mr. Gupta said that could be done as well (management/general, fundraising and program expenses as an example).

Ms Baalbaki moved, seconded by Mr. Christianson, to accept the annual financial scorecard report. There were no objections.

Meeting adjourned: 6:18 PM

Linda M. Elmer

Staff Assistant

This meeting can be viewed in its entirety through the City's Legislative Research Center at <http://milwaukee.legistar.com/calendar>.