



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

CHARTER SCHOOL REVIEW COMMITTEE

KEVIN INGRAM, CHAIR

Joyce Mallory, Vice-Chair

Desiree Pointer-Mace, Raynetta Hill, and Aycha Sawa

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Gayle Peay, 288-1540

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

5:00 PM

Virtual

Discussion on these items will be solely limited to each school's annual performance report. A vote may be taken on acceptance of each report.

Please join this meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

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1. Roll Call.

Meeting convened: 5:01 P.M.

Members present: Kevin Ingram, Joyce Mallory, Desiree Pointer-Mace, Raynetta Hill and Aycha Sawa.

2. Review and approval of the minutes of the Sept. 19th meeting.

Ms. Hill moved, seconded by Ms. Mallory, for approval of the minutes. There were no objections.

3. [230152](#)

Communication relating to the 2023-25 activities of Central City Cyberschool.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Jessica Whitaker - Executive Director

Leon Williams - Director of Education K-8th

Candica Coates - Director of Education 9-12th.

Dr. Aza Baylor said the school has 399 students and school had a scorecard of 65.4%. Ninety percent of 9th graders were promoted. This year was the first year of a graduating class; 56.3% of the seniors had post-secondary acceptances. Evident Change recommends annual monitoring with focus on reading and math skills.

Ms. Whitaker said they put the most time and effort this past year into supporting math skills. Their Forward exam scores for their targeted group look really great.

The bottom 25% of their kids are showing tremendous growth and the number of students scoring below basic is decreasing. This coming year they want to work on parent involvement, particularly as it relates to chronic absenteeism. When students do attend, they do make progress. About 60% of their high-school students are from their K-8 program.

Ms. Mallory suggested creating a form that parents sign relating to getting their kids to class and telling them that the school is rated on student attendance. Ms. Mallory suggested being creative in getting students to class.

Ms. Whitaker said they have seen increased growth in parent events, so that is a good sign.

Mr. Ingram asked about the two staff members who didn't have a license; they are working on resolving both of these situations.

Ms. Whitaker said they are creating a better system to identify struggling students and how to better intervene; the parent part of that is also very important.

Dr. Pointer-Mace moved, seconded by Ms. Sawa, to approve the recommendations of continued annual monitoring with a focus on reading and math.

4. [230151](#)

Communication relating to the 2023-25 activities of Milwaukee Academy of Science.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Dr. Baylor said the school has 1217 students and 100% of students received post-secondary acceptance. Evident Change recommends annual regular monitoring with special attention on math and reading.

Anthony McHenry - CEO

Mr. McHenry noted that the students have really struggled post-pandemic, but good progress is being made with the local measures. They are also working ensuring their students remain with them and have post-secondary options. They are working on improving their Forward numbers and have one position focusing on that. They also have lower attendance than they had pre-pandemic and they are working hard on that.

Dr. Chris Schwab - Chief Compliance Officer

Dr. Lita Mallett - Chief Academic Officer - they are working on a strategic and unified approach across all three academies and on elementary reading at levels K-3 with regular coaching of the students and teachers. The school has over 30 partnerships, involving mental health services, wraparound services, etc and work on how to support their students and their families. Students are only suspended for physical violence; their suspension rates have decreased.

Dr. Schwab said they have weekly meetings to address social-mental issues as well as mentioning emotional strategies during the morning announcement. They have also hired more social workers and are working with Pearls for Teen Girls.

Dr. Pointer-Mace moved, seconded by Ms. Hill, for approval of regular annual monitoring with special attention on improving math and reading skills.

5. [230153](#)

Communication relating to the 2023-25 activities of Darrel Lynn Hines College Preparatory Academy of Excellence.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Dr. Baylor said this school has 173 and a score card rating of 67.8% out of 90. Evident Change recommends regular annual monitoring with special emphasis on math and reading.

Dr. Precious Washington - the school created a parent coordinator this past year to connect with the families. They are also working with parents on their accountability to bring their children to school and on time (talk with them at the school door, via

telephone or home visits). Post-pandemic they do not have bus service (stopped in the 2021-22 school year, so this is the 2nd year), so teachers are able to connect more with parents. They also offer after-school care, which can be used to provide homework help and let parents pick up their children later. The school connects with its teachers several times a year and asks their opinions relating to policies and procedures. They have a program that works proactively with students in small groups and they hired a mental-health specialist to have conversations with students and teachers.

Lois Fletcher - Principal - she works with the teens and the academic connections. They are looking at the Forward data in greater detail and seeing where the students are below basic and not moving out of basic. They are also working on meeting their students' emotional needs as when those aren't met, they don't perform as well on tests as they normally would.

Dr. Pointer-Mace excused from the rest of the meeting at 6 p.m.

Some students did leave once transportation was discontinued, but those student numbers are starting to increase again. Dr. Washington does feel having parents drive their students is beneficial.

Ms. Mallory moved, seconded by Ms. Sawa, to continue annual monitoring with special emphasis on reading and math skills. There were no objections.

6. [230149](#)

Communication relating to the 2023-25 activities of Dr. Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Dr. Baylor said this school has 287 students and their score card was 70.9% out of 85 points. There were 4 teachers without current licenses and a suspension rate of 25.5%. All graduates were accepted into post-secondary education. Evident Change recommends regular, annual monitoring with special emphasis on increasing the number of students who are assessed in both the fall and spring on the required local measures.

Dr. Marcus Robinson - they are developing social and emotional programming and on an outstanding middle school program. This next year will be the first year of those students feeding into their high school.

Dr. Rosiline Floyd - new Chief of Staff - is working on doubling their student population. They are seeking new staff and they have many students who didn't do anything school-wise during Covid.

Dr. Robinson noted they have tweaked their entire curriculum and have made it more rigorous. They are looking for a specialist in talent recruitment for teachers. This is the first year they have been able to open with a complete staff and have increased the size of their staff.

Ms. Mallory said they had to be creative in how they locate and cultivate their staff.

Ms. Mallory moved, seconded by Ms. Hill, for approval of regular annual monitoring with special emphasis on increasing the number of students who are assessed in both the fall and spring on the required local measures. There were no objections.

7. [230150](#)

Communication relating to the 2023-25 activities of Escuela Verde.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Dr. Baylor said this school has 115 students, primarily Hispanic students and had a scorecard of 74.1% out of 85. They had a 19% suspension rate and 29 graduates, 18 of which went on to post-secondary education. Their graduation rate is 65%. Evident Change recommends regular annual reporting with special attention on math and reading.

Dr. Joey Zocher - the school is still feeling the ramifications coming out of Covid and

the school had a very community-centric approach to education. It was particularly difficult acclimating new students to their academic model. She is proud how committed staff was to following the community approach and teacher practices. She feels a good camaraderie among staff and students. They are trying a lot of new things, but they are doing it very clearly knowing it's going to be a long game. She feels like there is hope again. She feels there is a strong regrounding to re-training the staff.

Kim Johnson - started at the school last year and said a lot has changed and there is a big focus on culture and leaning on each other. They also changed the local measures. They have a large population of English language learners and those numbers have increased. She loves what the school is doing and she is very excited. They are leading with the data

Laurel Cutright - her first year as a school leader and her 6th year at the school. She is excited to be working at the school. Their restaurant is doing well.

Ms. Mallory thought these students don't necessarily have to go to a 4-year-school, but can get a credential in 18 months and get a high-paying job. The school staff should do some research on grant opportunities for their students to link them with employers.

Ms. Hill moved, seconded by Ms. Sawa, for regular annual monitoring with special attention on math and reading and submitting school data efficiently. There were no objections.

8. [230155](#)

Communication relating to the 2023-25 activities of Milwaukee Math and Science Academy.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

The school has 210 students, with almost nearly all African American, and a 28.7% suspension rate. One teacher was not listed and some aides/teachers were not certified for what they were teaching. They had a score of 65.8% out of 90 points. Evident Change recommends regular annual monitoring with special emphasis on reading, math and writing competencies.

Crysal Bielmeier - Principal - hired 5 teachers from the Philippines for the first time this year. They were given training in culture and academics; administration staff is spending a lot of time in their classrooms. They had 101 new students this prior academic year, increasing their total student body by 20-30 students. They have a reading coach to work with the teachers as well as a math coach for their teachers. They also now offer international math tutoring earlier this year than in prior years, as well as reading tutoring. They have added a playground. Their robotics team had their first practice last week and they think they are off to a great start this academic school year.

Ms. Mallory asked about the racial make-up of their staff - the majority are still white, but have a handful of African American staff members. Ms. Mallory was offended the school went to the Philippines, rather than hiring locally. She finds this disheartening and she is also concerned about their lack of African American teachers/staff. She asked how parents are responding to the Philippine teacher. Ms. Bielmeier said this was a better solution to them than hiring unlicensed teachers. They are trying to hire teachers that look like their students, but they just can't find them. Ms. Mallory noted the school needs to think how it can grow and retain talent. Ms. Bielmeier said she hasn't heard any concerns from the parents about the Philippine teachers.

Ashley Ellis - Assistant Principal - they are working with the colleges trying to have their students do student-teaching at their school.

Ms. Mallory and Mr. Ingram provided the school administration with information on where to recruit teachers from.

Ms. Mallory moved, seconded by Ms. Sawa, for regular annual monitoring with special emphasis on improving reading, math and writing competencies. There were

no objections.

9. [230154](#)

Communication relating to the 2023-25 activities of Downtown Montessori Academy.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Dr. Baylor said the school has 255 students and there is a 0% suspension rate. The students are majority white, but the diversity is growing. The score card was 71.4% out of 100 points. There were 2 unlicensed teachers and one unlicensed administrator. Evident Change recommends regular annual monitoring. Colleen McQuade - she was hired in June as the new Principal and Administrator of the school, so they are experiencing a lot of change and there is excitement in the air. They hired an outside consultant to be more culturally competent with families of color and to help those students achieve. They also hired a full-time counselor who is creating curriculum to help students self-regulate emotionally. They use Think Sheets to address unexpected behaviors to have students reflect on their behaviors and how they can fix a problem. She would like to see parent representation on the Board and they will do parent advisory with the hope of adding a parent Board member eventually. Their teacher retention is at 79.2% and it has been really hard to retain and hire teachers lately. They have implemented a literacy block of a dedicated one-hour instruction on phonetic and reading comprehension. Ms. Mallory is upset that the Board does not feel that parents should serve on the Board; she is willing to speak to the Board on this matter. Mr. Ingram also believes parents should serve on the Board. Ms. Mallory moved, seconded by Ms. Sawa, for regular annual monitoring. There were no objections.

Ms. Mallory noted there were no year-to-year comparisons for the scorecard itself. Dr. Baylor noted there is trend data included.

Ms. Mallory said she will be resigning from this board after many years of service. She would encourage schools to create retention bonuses for teachers.

Meeting adjourned: 7:29 P.M.

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>.