



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes

CHARTER SCHOOL REVIEW COMMITTEE

KEVIN INGRAM, CHAIR

Zaynab Baalbaki, Vice-Chair

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

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Wednesday, October 30, 2024

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.

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1. Roll call.

Meeting convened: 5:05 PM

Members present: Kevin Ingram, Bill Christianson, Catina Harwell-Young, Dr. Terri Brookshire and Zaynab Baalbaki

Members excused: Dr. Desiree Pointer-Mace

2. Review and approval of the minutes of the Sept. 26th meeting.

Ms. Harwell-Young moved, seconded Dr. Brookshire, to approve the minutes. There were no objections.

Dr. Baylor presented the overall results of the survey results and how they were compiled.

3. [230154](#)

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

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

This school had 254 students, with the majority being white. The school met all of its

compliance elements. The overall survey results were 89.5.
Mr. Ingram congratulated the Board on creating a Parent Advisory Committee.
Colleen McQuade said support staff gives less input as they aren't encouraged to use technology while working, so administration is encouraging them to check their e-mails off-hours at least once daily. The school has 3 Academic Interventionists who work with students performing below benchmark and meet with them for 8-12 weeks, typically in the areas of reading and math, but will also work on social and emotional learning. They then determine if the student is ready to return to the classroom. A full-time counselor was hired; this is her second year, and her work has been amazing. The entire school staff now speaks a common language and that has made a terrific impact.
Ms. Harwell-Young asked what they will be working on next year.
The recommendation is for annual, ongoing monitoring.
Ms. Harwell-Young moved, seconded by Ms. Baalbaki, for acceptance of the report.
There were no objections.

4. [230155](#) Communication relating to the 2023-25 activities of Milwaukee Math and Science Academy.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Dr. Baylor said the school has 244 students, the majority which are African-American. The school met all requirements and partially met one (5 teachers were not licensed by DPI last year). Their overall survey score was 77.1.
Mr. Christianson noted there are entire grade levels where there are no students meeting standard math assessment levels.
Ms. Crystal Bielmeier said the method of teaching math was switched two years ago and the hope is the new math curriculum (Eureka Math) will help them in basic math and then move on to higher math. The old curriculum wasn't working hence the change to the new curriculum; they are making growth in one assessment (NWEA), but not on the Forward exam. Teachers are also working with individual students and they are taking multiple approaches to assisting students.
Students have goals with sub-goals. Ms. Bielmeier said they have more parent volunteers this year to improve school culture. To retain staff, administration is constantly checking in with teachers who are struggling with a student or a teaching method. They are also now tracking how often they visit each classroom and meet with teachers; the Maestro management team has assisted with this as well. The administration also puts little goodies on their desks as a "thank you". Four of the five unlicensed teachers had licenses by April; the fifth one still didn't have one by June. Last year the school had five Filipino teachers and four remained this year and are doing a great job. Mr. Ingram encouraged them to launch a partnership with historic black colleges; DPI does have scholarships. Mr. Ingram is also concerned that only half of the middle-school students feel it's a supported environment (Ms. Bielmeier noted a lot of them hated the school lunches and often feel the discipline isn't fair). Math is a huge concern and they are continuing to work on the culture of the school. Mr. Ingram would like to see better test scores.
Ms. Baalbaki moved, seconded by Mr. Christianson, to accept Evident Change's recommendation of annual, on-going monitoring. There were no objections.

5. [230150](#) Communication relating to the 2023-25 activities of Escuela Verde.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

This school has 129 students, with the majority being Hispanic. They met all contract

requirements, except the one requiring that a majority of students maintain or improve their ACT scores. The survey overall score was 88.6.

Kim Johnson said that the school is talking up the tests and encouraging students to do their best. They are working on strategies to best support English Language Learning students. They are working on filling gaps. They are infusing English/language/math into this project-based school with specific classes as well having these components be a part of students' projects.

Mariela, citizen, asked how the school supported ESL parents to answer the survey; the survey was provided in Spanish as well (and the open-ended answers were translated from Spanish to add to the data). The same is true for the Spanish-speaking students.

The area for growth for next year is in attendance. They think that restorative justice will help its attendance rates and also work on their cafe, which is growing rapidly. The number of bilingual staff was not included in the report; almost half are bilingual.

Ms. Harwell-Young moved, seconded by Mr. Christianson, to accept the recommendation of Evident Change recommended annual, ongoing monitoring.

6. [230149](#)

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

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

This school has 317 students and the majority are African-American. The school met all contract requirements except 10 teachers were unlicensed and 11 students didn't have graduation plans. For the survey, the overall result was 72.4.

Mr. Christianson asked how the low scores for math and reading will be addressed.

Rodney Lynk, Jr. said the school implemented a new software called Alex to provide supplemental support and also a new curriculum titled, Envision Math. This is the first year of HFCA having a middle school and the hope is to get these students caught up. The school did hire someone to help students in small groups in math and their college alumni are tutoring their middle school students in certain concepts (in the hopes of encouraging those college students to return as teachers).

The school had hired some subs through an agency and were told those teachers would be getting their licenses. They now have an HR person to ensure teachers are licensed or assisting them in getting licensed. They are working toward 100% licensing. DPI sends an e-mail to the individual seeking licensure, but does not follow up if the person fails to respond; the onus is upon the applicant. Ms. Baalbaki asked what the school is doing to support its support staff; the school is working on making their schedules more predictable in subbing (they now have folks who have signed up to sub) and they are also doing a lot more surveys. The school is working on reducing its suspension rate and high withdrawal rate by creating a process rather than just having an individual being able to suspend a student. Marquette Peacemakers is also at its high school daily to help students manage their emotions. They are also working on reducing their tardiness rates and don't want to hold students responsible if it's the actions of adults, rather than the students.

Mr. Lynk took over the school in July and they are working on getting survey results/feedback from staff and parents; he will make sure that the teachers complete the Board's surveys.

The school is in a brand-new building with state-of-the-art equipment. The school has different arcs and each teacher knows where he/she stands in the classroom which will assist them in knowing they are the instructional leaders. Mr. Lynk has also asked his team what practices have worked and not worked. He would rather have the great instruction and a bad building than a great building and bad instruction. The school has to understand what "excellence" now looks like and raising expectations.

Mr. Christianson moved, seconded by Ms. Harwell-Young to approve Evident Change's recommended renewal with a five-year contract with annual, on-going monitoring. There were no objections.

7. [230153](#)

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

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

This school has 166 students with the majority being African American. They met all contract requirements, except for having 3 unlicensed teachers. The overall survey score was 80.7.

Mr. Christianson noted the Forward Exam results don't show a high rate of achieving the benchmarks. Ms. Lois Fletcher said the school is working on moving the students who are at the lowest scores up and they are enforcing this with the newest staff that they have, with coaching provided for these teachers. Ms. Fletcher said students are facing stress due to students struggling with wellness and building positive relationships. They implemented restorative practices and training so they can have real communication. They are working on creating and maintaining a safe space with a specialist in that area. The purpose is to educate, not discipline and they are currently in a transition stage. The school has the smallest class sizes of all the charter schools and, for newer teachers, it's difficult for them to handle 20 students. Due to the small class sizes, they don't have a lot of education assistants, but they do have small groups at times. Two of the unlicensed teachers are no longer at the school and the third one applied for a license with stipulations. Parents are always welcome in the building and the Board members may not have realized what the survey was. There was some confusion as to who was filling out what survey. The school has differentiated staff development; senior teachers need support with leadership while newer teachers (less than two years) need support in providing quality instruction. Students need to be part of the conversation involving cultural relevance and restorative justice as well as involving parents in the school culture.

The school will be working on restorative justice and make sure the conversation with the students/teachers/administration/parents will have the same expectations and goals.

Mr. Christianson moved, seconded by Ms. Baalbaki, to approve Evident Change's recommendation of annual, on-going reporting. There were no objections.

8. [230151](#)

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

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

This school has 1,397 students, with the majority African-American. 100% of 12th graders were accepted into a post-secondary education. The school met all contract requirements, except 7 teachers were unlicensed. The survey overall result was 75.1. Dr. Mallett said the school's proficiency marks are higher than its benchmark scores. Last year the emphasis was on reading, but there was not the focus on math, which will be done this year. They will be building up their curriculum, with books, and not just having software and are also working with the teachers. They have three annual benchmarks, now including math. They do expect to see higher numbers next year. Of the 7 unlicensed teachers, all 7 were in the application process and are working toward their licensure. Two of the seven are no longer employed at the school and they are working with two of them. Three are having issues with the testing, but are eligible for licensing with stipulations. So, of those that remain at the school, all are eligible.

The Board's low response rate to the survey might have been due to the school's lack of follow-up with Board members as well as staff and parents. The school is also coaching its teachers and using student data to guide that coaching. For K-12 they are now all using Star, rather than different software programs as well as doing on-going progress monitoring, data collection and interventions. They are moving into a data-driven instruction, rather than teaching based on feelings of how the students are doing. They are working on shifting the mind-set of what their kids can do and setting high expectations and providing support as needed. They are also investing significant resources in busing and recently purchased a van to pick up homeless children, those that missed the bus, etc. in order to improve their attendance rates. They also have an attendance campaign. A second van will start on Nov. 5th. Ms. Baalbaki moved, seconded by Ms. Harwell-Young to accept Evident Change's recommendation for annual, regular on-going monitoring. There were no objections.

9. [230152](#)

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

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

The school has 381 students with the majority being African-American. It met all contract requirements, except it had 6 unlicensed teachers and fewer than 50% of seniors maintained or improved their ACT scores. The overall survey score was 77.6. Jessica Whitaker is also concerned about the low scores in math at the high-school level, but students are showing advancement in growth year-to-year. For the 6 unlicensed teachers, they are working on passing the exams and a staffing agency they used provided unlicensed teachers. The main goal was to get teachers into the classroom; some of them are no longer employed with the school. The school did outreach to parents to complete the survey and they also had students and staff take the surveys while at school. The fact that the survey is anonymous means they cannot target those who didn't respond. Attendance has improved slightly, but not by much. Parents are around during school hours, but not in the evenings. They had a dedicated committee working on family events to involve parents. The community partnerships did result in employment for one student with WE Energies and a nursing internship for another student. The nail academy licensed 8 students to be nail techs. There are at least 10 students in the WE Energy apprenticeship program. For next year, they want to work on supporting their teachers more, with more staff being added to do so.

Mr. Whitaker wants to work on relationship building between the students and the teacher so the students are interested in learning. She also wants to establish clear expectations, particularly in primary literacy. The school has struggled with the changes in assessment changes, due to Act 20. The school could see the growth with PALS, but with STAR and MAP the students are on a device and it's not the same as sitting and observing behaviors as kids are reading. They need to seek out parents and help them understand the importance of early education in the pre-school years. They have a lot of new staff members this year and they are present on this call; they have the right people in the right places this year. They have been a high school since the 2019-20 school year.

Mr. Christianson moved, seconded by Ms. Baalbaki for approval of the recommendation of Evident Change for annual, on-going monitoring. There were no objections.

Meeting adjourned: 8:13 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>.