



City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53202

Meeting Minutes CHARTER SCHOOL REVIEW COMMITTEE

KEVIN INGRAM, CHAIR

*Glenn Steinbrecher, Melinda Scott Krei, Joyce Mallory, Gayle
Peay, and Desiree Pointer-Mace*

CSRC Clerk: Jarett Fields (414) 288-1540

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Thursday, September 24, 2015

5:30 PM

City Hall, Room 301-B

1. Roll call.

Meeting convened: 5:36 PM

All members present.

2. Review and approval of the minutes of the September 10th meeting.

*Ms. Scott Krei moved, seconded by Ms. Pointer-Mace, for approval of the minutes.
There were no objections.*

3. [150542](#)

Communication relating to the 2015/16 activities of Milwaukee
Collegiate Academy.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Janice Ereth - Children's Research Center.

*Judith Parker - Principal and Courtney Boswell - Dean of Instruction - Milwaukee
Collegiate Academy*

*This is the fourth year as a charter and the school is located at 29th and Capitol.
During the year of this report Resheida Evans was the principal. The school is for
9-12 grades with 212 students enrolled, all of whom are African American and get
free or reduced lunch. This school had 15 items to comply with its contract; 10 of
them were met and 4 of them are pending relating to the DPI embargo, which
includes the ACT 11th grade reports. They did not meet one item, which was teacher
licensure (a physical education teacher had a license from Illinois and an English
language arts teacher has a license that expired in 2014). There has been slight
upward movement in all trends, except for the student return rate. The
recommendations included adopting additional strategies to approve retention rates
of lower-level students, particularly among 9th graders, selecting new and innovative
ways to improve student writing skills and returning to local measure tools that are
better aligned to the school's curriculum and that are more useful to parents (this
recommendation has been done). She recommends contracting with the school for
another five years.*

*Ms. Pointer-Mace wanted to know where the 9th graders were going that had left the
school and what programs have been put in place to anticipate students who may
drop out. Ms. Ereth said that the academic expectations might be too intimidating to
those students and they are seeking schools that they can attend part-time and still*

get a diploma. The school has begun a week-long orientation to improve retention rates among 9th graders. There's also a sit-down conversation with transfer students so they understand the expectations and has created another position of Dean of Students.

Ms. Boswell said the school focuses on professional development for staff every-other week and have also increased the number of special education staff and works more one-on-one with students. They're also working on teaching deescalation strategies to staff. Ms. Parker noted that the school is also supporting co-teaching. The school has also been working with the Parent Council, which has been recruiting more parents (the goal is 10% of each grade level). The first meeting will be in October. They're also encouraging teachers to contact parents. Ms. Ereth doesn't know if the Wisconsin Dept. of Public Instruction (DPI) still has a backlog of pending licensure, which last year took 8-10 months to obtain. There are pending licenses, but they have all been applied for.

Ms. Boswell noted that the school really focused on getting 9th graders to school and to remain in school and a small improvement was seen in the retention rate. The school also focused on getting homework completed. The school is trying to recruit more students with a goal of 300 students. They do the most recruitment in the 9th and 10th grades.

Ms. Boswell said a writing class was created at every grade level and are pushing writing in all their courses.

Twenty eight students graduated and received college acceptance letters - of those students, they don't yet know how many have actually enrolled, although they will pursue this information. Ms. Ereth noted that two years ago it was 80% were enrolled and last year it was 50%. The school does do data testing of its students and is not solely working on ensuring they test well, but that they succeed in college.

For suspended students, the school staff has begun working on deescalation techniques and circles in how students manage their frustration, anger and disappointment. Parents are contacted for in-school suspensions and students are given the work they need to make up and the time to do so.

Ms. Pointer-Mace moved, seconded by Ms. Scott Krei, to accept the report and consider a five year renewal.

4. [150776](#)

Communication relating to the 2015/16 activities of the Milwaukee Academy of Science.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Janice Ereth - Children's Research Center

Judy Maribel - President and CEO

Tresca Miley - Achievement Director of the Elementary Academy

Jordan Last - Principal of the Elementary Academy

Jeremy Brown - Principal of the Primary Academy

Karen Penvose - Achievement Director of the Primary Academy

Linda Bellinger - Achievement Director of the middle school

Christy Becker - Principal of the middle school

Chris Schwab - Principal of the high school

Ms Ereth said that there are four components to this school - primary, elementary, middle and high school. The school is located at 20th and Kilbourn. The high school principal when this report was issued has left. The school is K4-12 and there were 872 students enrolled, with 99% African American and all getting free or reduced lunch. The contract required 18 items - 11 were met, 4 were not applicable, 2 are pending (Badger exams and ACT) and one is not met (a teacher in the junior academy was not licensed). The trend data tends to go up and down and the middle school staff did a tremendous job this year. Overall, the trends are improving. The recommendations are:

Primary/elementary

1. Monitor reading and math skills closely and work with parents to incorporate the parents into the school.

Junior Academy:

1. Expand the array of career fields that students are exposed to.
2. Use teacher effectiveness data for staff

High school:

1. Engage specific students to own the process.
2. Set specific objectives for each class.
3. Use teacher effectiveness data for staff

Ms. Ereth recommends continual and annual monitoring and they are not up for contract renewal.

Mr. Schwab said that the high school students want more field trips and real-world experience, which they are working with the Medical College of Wisconsin to work on this goal. They want to get the students excited about learning and taking a leadership role in meeting deadlines. They are also working on doing interim testing, rather than just the ACT, to see where students are struggling and can assist them. The middle school team did an interim assessment and created their own assessment. The teachers then analyze the data to look for overall trends to see what needs to be re-taught as well as where individual students are floundering. Ms. Scott Krei noted how many community partnerships the school has on its board and Marquette University and the Water Council are working with the school. They hope to use this to get more student engagement in the 4th and 5th grades to identify potential careers specific students might want to be interested in. Ms. Pointer-Mace thought that inquiry and curiosity can be a great point to start from, rather than being used as a reward. Ms. Maribel said that science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is being focused on more in the younger grades. The school is also sensitive in supporting its teachers so any new experiences that they try go well. Ms. Scott Krei noted that you can then attract more creative teachers and that can be used as a recruiting technique. They have 13 new teachers out of 77. For new teachers, the new staff come in for specialized training for behavior, culture and setting the tone in the classroom and they are also integrated in with the returning staff. They also provide new teacher seminars for such things as parent-teacher conferences and building relationships. They also encourage new teachers to take risks.

There are about 10 teachers with pending licenses and Ms. Maribel is confident they'll have their licenses before the end of the year. The FORT (Foundations of Reading Test) exam doesn't need to be taken until after graduation and sometimes the teachers need to take it more than once in order to pass. The elementary teachers tend to be generalists, so it's harder for them to create their own student assessments, as was done at the middle school level. Once this is done, it will result in valuable data for the school and teachers. Teacher growth and professional development is done in collaboration with the administration, both for new and veteran teachers. Everything they do with the teachers is data driven.

The return rate for 5th to 6th grade is 90% and from 8th to 9th grade is 70% - some of the reasons for the lower attrition rate is the high school may not be the best option for its student (those who aren't interested in science careers), moving, tired of the uniforms, tired of the same hot lunches. There are students who leave at the 9th grade, but then return at the 10th grade. They are also working on offering more sports and extracurricular events through partnerships.

They are going to continue with the Common Core. They also increased the minutes for reading and math and also utilized social studies and other teachers that could support other classrooms. For the elementary students, they began working on

meeting more frequently with teachers on reading and get improved testing of student reading levels.

They are pleased with the K4 students and a lot of the outreach was around homework and students in K4 are readers in the second semester.

Twenty six students graduated and were accepted into college, but they are not currently monitoring if those students are attending. They are brainstorming as to how they can track these students, using volunteers or interns. More students are attending four-year colleges, which the school has been encouraging students to apply to, rather than just applying at MATC, which is just down the road.

For special needs students, they offer both inclusion and pull-out services.

For elementary suspensions, a new Dean of Students, who was already working at the school, was hired. For in-school suspensions, the students are counseled and receive tutoring support from an intern. For the middle school, they are working on incentives for positive behavior and the students want to be in school. At the high school level they are looking at alternatives for suspensions, such as coaching, intervention, mediation or deescalation.

Ms. Scott Krei moved to accept the report and follow the recommendations to monitor annually, seconded by Ms. Peay. There were no objections.

5. [150605](#)

Communication relating to the 2015/16 activities of Escuela Verde.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Janice Ereth - Children's Research Center

Jo Zuckerman -Advisor

Bobby Widow - Former Advisor

Bethany Vanez - Advisor

Dan Grego - Executive Director of TransCenter for Youth, which is the parent organization.

The school, this year, moved into a renovated warehouse at 36th and Pierce and the students were involved in designing the space. The administration is a team, an advisor collective and the administrative responsibilities are divided. Seventh through 12 grade are served and it has 67 students with the intention of increasing to 100 students this year. Sixty eight percent are Latino, 15% are African American, 9% are Caucasian as well as other population groups. They have a high special ed population (20%). There were 14 items that need to be met for contract compliance - 11 of them were met and one was partially met (not all of the 12 graders took the ACT, although all were registered for it). Their trend data is generally improving, although there was a slight drop in attendance. There are 5-6 advisors, with one not returning. The recommendation was to increase the rigor of the school year and to increase the interdependence of students and to focus on reading and math competence, and assist staff in maximizing their efficiency. The recommendation is for regular and annual reporting. The school is project-based and they want to make sure students fully understand what that is like for a full day. The goal is to have the students create student-lead projects. Ms. Vanez said that the majority of special education students are diagnosed with a specific learning issue and this allows the student to move at his or her own pace (and credits are based on how much time is spent on a topic). They also have a lot of students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and the school offers open space and they don't have to sit and listen to a teacher. Ms. Zuckerman said the new space is working very well - they spend a lot of time outside in the park behind the school. They also take the children on the Hank Aaron trail daily as part of a wellness program. They are struggling getting students for the middle school (there are currently only 10 of them) and they might consider dropping middle school if it doesn't make sense for the school. Advisors check in with students daily, which might be for a brief period and for longer periods (20 minutes) as needed. There are also 10 minutes in the morning

and 30 minutes at the end of the day to gather together all the students. There is also designated math time of one hour. Each advisor has 15-17 students. The school expanded this year with new staff and new students. Due to the orientation, the large majority of new students do realize what the expectations are and what the school is like. They have pods of teachers to reflect on what is working and what is not.

They are well-aware of the students that are far behind and they give those students more time and also have support staff that assist. They also have math groups and reading groups, which students can volunteer to be in or the school can require that they attend.

They had 16 students who graduated - 4 of them are currently in college and one is going in January. Some past graduates are also starting college this year. They do not track this and are starting homecoming this year to try to track former students. Ms. Zuckerman think the students who aren't in college are working. They don't see themselves as a college prep school, but try to offer that choice to students. For studentse who don't take the ACT because they really aren't interested in a 4-year college, they try to get those acquainted with apprenticeship programs or other career choices. One of the contract agreements was that all students would take the ACT, which concerns the chair. There are other tests which the school could administer. The school has administered the HOPE survey and could provide that data.

Ms. Pointer-Mace moved, seconded by Ms. Peay, for adoption of the recommendations.

6. Public Testimony

Larry Hoffman - had general questions and specifics about the specific schools.

LaVonna Lakatril - board member - Milwaukee Collegiate Academy

Tracy Thompson - son at Escuela Verde in the 9th grade

Meeting adjourned: 7:58 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>.