



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
53202

## Meeting Minutes

### CHARTER SCHOOL REVIEW COMMITTEE

**KEVIN INGRAM, CHAIR**

**Joyce Mallory, Vice-Chair**

**Ruben Burgos, Melinda Scott Krei, Monique Liston, Desiree  
Pointer-Mace, and Glenn Steinbrecher**

**Staff Assistant: Linda Elmer, (414) 286-2231**

**Fax: 286-3456, lelmer@milwaukee.gov**

**Gayle Peay, 288-1540**

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Thursday, December 15, 2016

5:30 PM

City Hall, Room 301-A

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**1. Roll call.**

*Meeting convened: 5:30 P.M.*

*Members excused: Joyce Mallory and Melinda Scott Krei*

**2. Review and approval of the minutes of the November 17th meeting.**

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

**3. [150670](#)**

Communication relating to the 2015/16 activities of Central City  
Cyberschool.

**Sponsors:** THE CHAIR

*Susan Gramling - Children's Research Center*

*Christine Falks - executive director - will be retiring and Ms. Shamanski and Mr.  
Williams will be replacing her*

*Jessica Shamanski - Director of Curriculum and Assessment*

*Leon Williams - Director of Culture, Climate and Community*

*Ms. Gramling said Cyberschool is located on the north side in the Parklawn Housing  
Development. It is in its 17th year of operation and serves students K4-8th grade.*

*There were 405 students, all of whom are African-American, and all of the students  
are eligible for free lunch. The school has met all of the contract requirements.*

*Twenty three teachers were interviewed and 72% of the parents and teachers  
reported the school's contribution to learning as "excellent" or "good". Two board  
members were interviewed and they rated the school as "good". The school got an  
A- on the score card. The school could work on increasing the 1st grade reading  
level and writing as well. The Children's Research Center recommends continuation  
of the regular, annual academic reporting.*

*Mr. Steinbrecher recommended raising the goals for student attendance and  
parent/teacher conference attendance since they have nearly attained the current  
goals. The school is working on integrating Chromebooks into the classroom  
curriculum. Mr. Steinbrecher and Ms. Pointer-Mace were both concerned that the  
scores decrease in the 7th and 8th grades. Mr. Steinbrecher is concerned that 97.8  
of the students in the 8th grade score at below basic or basic level. Ms.  
Pointer-Mace said that it seems like the focus in the early grades is on reading but in*

*the higher levels it needs to be on understanding and thinking of what students are reading and going beyond solely reading the words and comprehending at a deeper level. The school is now working on limiting hand-holding during reading so the students learn to become more independent readers. Ms. Pointer-Mace and Ms. Liston said that always pushing the school, students and staff to do better. Ms. Falks said the school is very successful in retaining its staff and senior teachers meet on a schedule with other teachers, which provides a structure to support new teachers.*

*Ms. Pointer-Mace asked if students are producing content rather than just consuming content on the computers. Google Classroom has really integrated computers and ClassDojo has really increased communication between teachers and parents. It is used to share videos, positive news and for additional learning opportunities.*

*Mr. Burgos asked about the teacher scores relating to adhering to discipline policy - 9 teachers reported it as being "fair" and one as being "poor". Ms. Falks said the school philosophy is not punishment and putting kids out of school, which some of the teachers might find frustrating. The school has restorative circles which is not a quick fix. Suspension rates have decreased radically.*

*Ms. Shamanski said the school recently began using the Lucy Calkins piece to integrate reading and writing skills. Mr. Ingram commended the school on decreasing its suspension rate. Chrome books don't go home, but they can use their school account to log in, but most students do not do so.*

*The school also partnered with the Jewish Community Center and they provide a therapist on site two days a week for students and their families. Lenscrafters also provides free annual eye exams and glasses.*

*Ms. Pointer-Mace moved, seconded by Ms. Liston, to accept the recommendation for regular annual monitoring. There were no objections.*

4. [150689](#)

Communication relating to the 2015/16 activities of the Rocketship Southside Community Prep.

**Sponsors:** THE CHAIR

*Ms. Susan Gramling, Children's Research Center -*

*Rodney Link, Jr. - Principal*

*Britney Kinser - Regional Director*

*Ralph Weber - Board Chair*

*This school is located at 43rd and Cleveland and is in its third year of operation and serves K4-5th grade. They have 417 students and 94.7% kids are Hispanic or of Latino background; with 14.6% having special education needs. Sixty five percent of the kids were eligible for free lunch. The school met all its contract requirements, except one teacher did not hold a DPI license or permit. Ninety four percent of the parents rated their school as "excellent" or "good" and a large number of teachers rated it the same. Only fifth graders took the online survey and there were 25 of them. Ms. Gramling spoke to three board members, all of whom rated the school as "excellent" or "good" and the scorecard was a "B" for the school. The school's scores increased quite a bit from last year's. The areas of relative weakness are first grade reading scores and local measures for math. The recommendations are to continue the small group instruction for reading and math and continue tutoring for the lowest-level achieving students and add community circles at the beginning of every class and to work on communication between teachers and with parents as well. The center recommends regular annual academic monitoring.*

*Mr. Burgos questioned the teacher return rate of 78%. which has been decreasing, although it has only been three years worth of data. Ms. Pointer-Mace asked what the long-term goal of teacher retention was. Mr. Link said they are working on building a culture to retain teachers. This year the school added its fifth core value of "Con forza" (with effort) and working with experts to improve the school culture to*

*involve parents, students and teachers. They work on having new teachers meet with more experienced teachers and support from Rocketship national. The first graders seem to be struggling with meeting benchmarks in second grade, which is the original K5 group and they were behind. One issue is that the school has two first grade teachers and one had to leave in September due to family issues. There are currently 509 students enrolled, which is almost 100 more students than last year.*

*The community circles were started to have the entire school together at 7:30 a.m. and work on having everyone know each other better to build a community. Mr. Ingram asked if there are plans to add more board members. They currently have three members and plan to add one more in February with the hopes of having 5-7 members by the end of the year. They are also considering adding a parent board member. Mr. Ingram asked who will be monitoring how the students do after this school? Ms. Kinser said they do need to create a plan as to how they will track former students. The school is trying to work on being a feeder school as part of a chain for students for K4-12.*

*Mr. Ingram cautioned that there is a 4-6 month delay with licensing out-of-state teachers. Mr. Ingram also wondered how such young children can have discipline problems. They are also learning that the same strategy does not always work and they are working on finding strategies that work for the most students.*

*Mr. Weber said he is happy with the support from the Rocketship network which gives them access to other experts and support. He thinks the Rocketship model works on overcoming poverty and works for the kids. The teachers feel there is a disconnect between the national organization and the local school. Mr. Link said there are a lot of coaches from national on site at times.*

*Mr. Burgos moved, seconded by Ms. Liston, to accept the recommendations of the Children's Research Center for regular academic monitoring. There were no objections.*

5. [150541](#)

Communication relating to the 2015/16 activities of King's Academy.

**Sponsors:** THE CHAIR

*Ms. Susan Gramling said that it was in its sixth year of operation and served K4-8th grade and there were 179 students at the end of last year, with 95.9% being African American and 100% getting either free or reduced lunch. It met all but one contract requirements, with having one teacher who didn't have a license from DPI. Six teachers were interviewed and they all thought the school's progress was good; 41 parents responded to the survey and were pleased with the school and four board members scored the school as "fair" or "good". The score card report was a D-. This school is no longer chartered by the city and is now a choice school.*

*Ms. Pointer-Mace pointed out that none of the kids with disabilities met any of their goals and, as a choice school, they will not be required to meet those goals.*

*Ms. Pointer-Mace moved, seconded by Mr. Steinbrecher, accept the report.*

6. [150543](#)

Communication relating to the 2015/16 activities of North Point Lighthouse.

**Sponsors:** THE CHAIR

*Ms. Susan Gramling, Children's Research Center, said they didn't have the data needed to do a comprehensive report. The school was on probation and closed suddenly. Because the data was not available, many of the contract provisions are listed as "not met". They did have parent survey results from 80 families and most of them rated the school as "excellent" or "good" and would recommend the school to other parents. Ms. Pointer-Mace thought one of the main flaws of this school is that*

*they could not retain leadership, which led to a lack of teacher retention.*

*Comments from the public:*

*Larry Hoffman - were lessons learned by CRC or CSRC from King's Academy and Northpoint Lighthouse? Neither CRC or CSRC did not think anything differently could be done by themselves. This school was a worst-case scenario compared to how other schools were closed in the past.*

*Ms. Pointer-Mace moved, seconded by Mr. Steinbrecher, accept the report.*

*Meeting adjourned: 7:47 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>.*