



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, Naryan David Leazer, Monique Liston, Desiree
Pointer-Mace, and Glenn Steinbrecher**

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Thursday, November 9, 2017

5:30 PM

City Hall, Room 301-B

1. Roll call.

Meeting convened: 5:33 P.M. (Ms. Mallory arrived at 5:41 P.M.)

Excused: Ms. Pointer-Mace and Ms. Liston

2. Review and approval of the minutes from the October 25th meeting.

Mr. Burgos moved, seconded by Mr. Steinbrecher, for approval of the minutes. There were no objections.

3. [170705](#)

Communication relating to the 2017/19 activities of Central City Cyberschool.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Sue Gramling, Children's Research Center, said the school is in its 19th year and serves k4 through 8th grade and had 409 students at the end of the school year last year; 99.5% of the students are African American and 10.5% are special education students. All of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. All CSRC and contract requirements were met by the school, but the pilot scorecard was lower this past year (83.4% versus 73.1%) - the scorecard was lower due to the Forward Exam results. The recommendations for school improvement are to seek funding for its virtual reality lab and implement the continuous improvement program and continue the transition in school administration. The CRC recommendation is for regular annual monitoring and they be granted a 5-year renewal contract.

Christine Falks - Executive Director (will be retiring the end of this academic year)

Jessica Schmanks - will be Executive Director next year

Mandy Bar - Technology Integration Coach and Director of Curriculum Government and Assessment

Leon Williams - Director of School Culture, Community and Climate

The school has a 30-station mobile virtual reality lab and gives students the opportunity to see things they wouldn't normally be able to see and an opportunity to learn.

The school's retention rate is 88.9% for staff. The board meets quarterly and they are trying to increase the membership to approximately 10 among business leaders; they are not recruiting parents at this time, but might reconsider.

For teachers who have 100% participation of parents in the spring parent-teacher conferences, the reward is they can wear jeans in June. They also have a parent coordinator who works hard at getting parents involved and teachers do everything possible to make contact with parents.

Mr. Williams said the goal is to use suspensions as little as possible - they have put other behavior-modification techniques in place. They do teach Lucy Caulkins for writing and they are starting to see success with it. The plan for the board for next year is to explore extending the school by one year each year until grade 12. The math scores went down for the 5th grade and 7th/8th grade, so the 7th/8th grade teacher was not invited back. The lower math scores were disappointing as the school has typically had high math scores. Ms. Falks feels the students know more than the Forward test shows and it might be a matter of their unfamiliarity with multiple-choice, online exams. They use Frontline right now to supplement the math skills, but they are still following their same math curriculum that they have always taught. They do have staff development for their staff.

Mr. Burgos moved, seconded by Ms. Mallory, for regular annual academic monitoring and reporting and 5-year renewal of their contract. There were no objections.

Ms. Gramling congratulated Ms. Falks on the fine work she has done and wished her the best.

4. [170708](#)

Communication relating to the 2017/19 activities of the Darrell Lynn Hines College Preparatory Academy of Excellence.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Ms. Susan Gramling, Children's Research Center, said the school has been operating for 16 years and has K4-8th grade with 90.4% of the 260 students being African American and 10.4% were special education and 92.3% of the students were eligible for free or reduced lunch. The school met all of the provisions of its contract and all CSRC expectations. The score card was 65.8% this year and the previous year was 71.4%. The Forward Exam was also difficult for its students. The school did not maintain over 70% from the previous year. The student measures increased in reading, math and writing, as well as in their teacher retention and teacher return rates. The recommendations were created by Ms. Gramling and the school administration to work on this year and are included in the report. CRC recommends regular annual academic monitoring with an option to place this school on probation if it's needed once another year's data is obtained. The school did show progress in the local measures and the PALS scores.

Precious Washington - Executive Director

Lois Fletcher - Principal

The board meets 4-5 times during the school year and has a parent representative, a teacher representative, an attorney and a founder of the school. They have also had conversations with PAVE to provide support to make the board more professional. The school has an Executive Director, Principal and for the first year an Assistant Principal as well as teachers for each grade and some grades having educational assistants. The school needs to work on culture and climate as well as on decreasing suspensions. They are also working on teaching students how to interact with each other. The school is working on decreasing the number of its suspensions which had been trending down, but has now leveled. This year the focus is on having students believe in themselves and having students not being merely compliant, but to internalize the behavior. The returning students are internalizing this behavior and the school continues to work on these behavior issues.

The school wants to use what services they have in place more efficiently and effectively and build stamina for taking an exam. They also want to give students

more experience with online tests, which the Forward is. The teachers are organized on teams and work on consistent teaching and planning as well as weekly all-staff meetings and monthly meetings. They are also working on building teacher leadership and working with students to self-improve rather than the effort coming from the teacher. The school has 11 teachers, 3 of whom are African American and the rest are caucasian, which is similar to most city-chartered schools. Teachers model the behaviors they want to see in their students.

Motions by Ms. Mallory and Mr. Steinbrecher were withdrawn.

Ms. Mallory moved, seconded by Mr. Steinbrecher, for regular, annual academic monitoring and reporting with the option of putting the school on probation based upon the results next fall. There were no objections.

5. [170704](#)

Communication relating to the 2017/19 activities of the Rocketship Southside Community Prep.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Ms. Susan Gramling, Children's Research Center, said Rocketship is in its 4th year of operation and served K4-5th grade with 95% of students being Hispanic and 9% are special education and 67% qualify for free or reduced lunch. The school met all but one of the contract requirements; it did not meet the requirement for all instructional staff to have an active license or permit as there were 2 K5 teachers and 3 paraprofessionals who did not have the required DPI licenses. The previous year the score card was 77.3% and this year it was below 70% at 66.6%. The local measures in reading and writing both dropped significantly from the prior year. The other concern on the scorecard was the teacher return rate, which also decreased. The return rate for this fall, however, is back up. The school wants to track individual student work through all the grades as well as work on teacher return rate and community circles and student behavior. The recommendation is for regular annual academic monitoring with the option of placing the school on probation next fall. CRC recommends renewal of the contract for 5 years.

Jordan Blanton - Principal

Brittany Kinzer - Regional Director and founding Principal

Rocketship is opening another charter school on the north side, but it won't be chartered by the city. The board has 5 members but will be adding 2 more members by the end of this year with adding a community member and a parent member. The board meets quarterly.

They are working diligently on getting 100% participation of parents on parent/teacher conferences. Suspensions generally average one day. This year the school is working on creating a vision and goals to see how they are going to attain this vision and if they are moving toward it. All of their teachers are now licensed and they are going to ensure that teachers are licensed prior to entering the classroom. The school is now no longer tracking parent-teacher conferences, but tracking on how many students have had home visits, which seem to result in a deeper relationship between the student/parents/teacher/school. Many of the home visits began in the summer and 52% have been completed so far. They are using the same activities to create relationships between the students with the staff, which has resulted in higher teacher return rates. The math focus is on working on problem solving by students and explaining how they got to the correct answer.

Mr. Burgos moved, seconded by Ms. Mallory, for regular annual academic monitoring with the option of placing the school on probation next fall and 5-year renewal of the school. There were no objections.

Meeting adjourned: 8:03 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>.