



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, Desiree Pointer-Mace,
and Glenn Steinbrecher*

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Gayle Peay, 288-1540

Wednesday, October 9, 2019

5:30 PM

City Hall, Room 301-A

1. Roll call.

Meeting convened: 5:30 P.M.

All members present (Mr. Steinbrecher, Mr. Leazer, Mr. Burgos, Mr. Ingram, Ms. Mallory and Ms. Pointer-Mace)

Also present: Gayle Peay - staff and Susan Gramling - Children's Research Center (CRC)

2. Review and approval of the minutes of the June 5th meeting.

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

3. [190977](#) Communication relating to the 2019-21 activities of Central City Cyberschool.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Jessica Szymanski- Executive Director

Mandie Barr - Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Leon Williams - Director of Culture, Climate & Community

Susan Gramling said this school is located on the north side near Park Lawn public housing and this is its 20th annual report. They serve K4-8th grade last year and are currently serving 9th grade as well with 415 students enrolled last year. Almost 100% are African American and all receive free lunch. The school earned 66.1% of possible points, which was a slight increase from last year. Math was a struggle in terms of maintaining proficiency - dropping from 55.1% to 44.6%. More special education students increased in local proficiency so there were both pluses and minuses. The school improvement recommendations are on page iii and there will be a push this year to improve communication between special education staff and regular staff in an attempt to more fully integrate special education students, termed "push in". The school continues to struggle with its Forward results.

CRC recommends annual monitoring with the expectation that the score card results will improve this year.

Ms. Pointer-Mace commended the school for retaining its families and students. Ms. Barr said that an issue with middle-school math is that the students who come in late

don't have the skills needed for their level, which results in the same teacher teaching 2-4 grades levels during the same math hour. They did have a turnover in a math teacher, as well as changed the math curriculum. They also try to focus on math more in the STEM class. Ms. Mallory asked about the class size and thought that 25 was a large-size class. This is the third year they have had a new special education teacher and she is advocating the "push in" of special education students. Mr. Leazer questioned the role of the board and how long members serve. Board members do continue in service over long periods of time. There were fewer suspensions this past year as they were actively working on keeping students in the learning environment. The number of suspensions continues to decrease and the fact that the school has a relationship with the parents really does help in decreasing those numbers. They have had staff training on being more aware of student/teacher differences to prevent being inadvertently offensive to either students or other staff. Ms. Mallory encouraged the school to have its staff walk through Park Lawn and visit their students in their homes and visit the elders in the community. Most of the suspended students were not repeat suspensions; probably only one or two students.

Mr. Ingram asked schools to bring a board member with them. He also encouraged the school to add more parents to their board. He would also like schools to talk to schools whose students are succeeding at the Forward exam.

The school has a 5-year grant titled, "Talent Search" to help students envision where they will be in the future.

Mr. Burgos moved to continue annual monitoring with the expectation that the score card results would improve over the coming year, seconded by Ms. Mallory. There were no objections.

4. [190978](#)

Communication relating to the 2019-21 activities of Darrel Lynn Hines College Preparatory Academy of Excellence.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Precious Washington - Executive Director

Lois Fletcher - Principal

Ms. Gramling said the school is located on the far northwest side and is in its 17th year of operation and serves K4-8th grade. There were 268 students enrolled last year and 87.3% were African American and 11.6% of students were special education and 97.4% were eligible for free or reduced lunch. The school met all provisions of its contract with the city. The school scored 70.4% of possible points compared to 62.4% last year and increased its performance in all of the local measures, reading, math and writing. The special education students scored the same as last year. There was also marked improvement in kids who were behind in the scores from last year, so their focus on those students did pay off. CRC recommends continued annual monitoring.

Mr. Steinbrecher asked if busing was still a problem. Ms. Washington noted that it has improved based upon a meeting with the bus company and the school helped the company recruit employees. So far the bus company performance has been okay. Mr. Leazer questioned if the school is so focused on teaching for the Forward exam that it impedes its ability to provide other educational opportunities. Ms. Fletcher thought the Forward exam requires students to think as well as know the basics, so there really is no "teaching to the test". The school demands that parents come to both conferences, will go to the parents' homes or jobs and keep calling until the parents come. They have left notes on doors saying they were there and will be back. They do mention the requirement to attend conferences during orientation. Mr. Leazer also asked about the role of the board and its membership. PAVE has provided professional development to its board members, which has been very beneficial. Mr.

Burgos questioned that more than 1/3 of students have been suspended. The school did work on enforcing the rule that students be in school by 9 a.m. The school is really looking at the local measures to see the students' progress and are only backing up educationally for the new students, rather than for all students. The Chair noted that Rufus King does have a 2-week bridge program for new students.

Mr. Steinbrecher moved to continue annual monitoring, seconded by Ms. Mallory. There were no objections.

5. [190979](#) Communication relating to the 2019-21 activities of Downtown Montessori Academy.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Virginia Flynn - Head of School

Howard Austin - board member

Ms. Gramling said the school is located in Bayview and this is the 21st annual report and was one of the original chartered schools. It serves K3 to eighth grade and last year had 299 students. It is a racially diverse school, with 69% white kids and 14.3% Hispanic with other small minority groups. The school met all contract requirements. The score card went down a little bit, but is very high at 81.2% of the possible points, compared to 84.2% the prior year. The year-to-year Forward results was where the results dropped slightly with students maintaining proficiency in reading and math. Their teacher retention rates are remarkable. CRC recommends continued annual monitoring.

Ms. Flynn said that the school is using classroom assistants to work with students who are below basic level and looking at individual students on a monthly basis. She would like all teachers to be able to do math, not just the math teachers. The school would like to have math integrated throughout all education classes, including the creation of the school's prairie garden. Mr. Leazer questioned why this school's special education population is so low - Ms. Flynn feels it is because the school takes an intervention route and figures out how each child learns. The school accepts students through a lottery system as they have so many applicants. Ms. Flynn is grooming her replacement, but she was tied up at the school tonight. The board has been very stable. Mr. Austin said that the board does accomplish things. The school did not suspend from the school any students in the past year and has added more support staff to work with students facing in-school suspension in an attempt to figure out why a behavior is happening.

Mr. Leazer moved to continue regular annual monitoring and reporting, seconded by Mr. Burgos. There were no objections.

6. [190980](#) Communication relating to the 2019-21 activities of Milwaukee Math and Science Academy.

Sponsors: THE CHAIR

Alper Akyurek - Principal

Crystal Gilmeier - Assistant Principal of Academics

Ms. Gramling said the school is located on the near northeast side and this is its 8th year of being a city-chartered school and serves k4-8th grade and there were 266 students last year. Ninety seven percent of the students are African American and 14.7% are special education students and all students were eligible for free lunch. The school met all but one contract requirement because one 2nd grade teacher did not have a DPI license. The school improved to 59.5%, a 4.7% increase from the prior year. The local measures all increased by 5% or 10% and the student and teacher

return rates both improved as well. The school has been on probation with targets set for improvement. The school met its goals, but fell short on the score card (got a 59.5% rather than the goal of 66.8% for two years in a row). The score card is rising and CRC recommends that the school remain on probation with the expectation that the score card be at least 4% higher next year.

Mr. Steinbrecher asked how the school was able to increase the parent participation so much. Ms. Gilmeier said that the school tried every communication method. Last year was the first year the school had three special education teachers and that has really helped with students with emotional issues. The teachers are finding strategies on how to educate students who have to move and cannot sit still. Special education students have time in the regular classroom as well as time in a special education classroom. They are focusing more on the students they have and not accepting new students so they can focus on the ones they have and also work on identifying groups of students that are lacking the same skills. Ms. Gilmeier said that she thinks a number of students give up too easily and need to work on perseverance. The best math teacher was moved to the middle school. This school starts in August and some kids leave once other schools begin, which may mean that parents are using the school as a free daycare service. The school brought in fewer than 25 students this year and 2 teachers which is a benefit for this coming school year. Concepts School is writing off a large portion of its fee to assist the school. They expect suspension rates to go down as they are looking at other alternatives, such as community service or Saturday hours and working with parents to figure out how to help the students. A social worker is also now coming to the school three days a week and they do role-playing and work on having students work things out between themselves with a moderator.

Ms. Mallory moved that that school remain on probation with the expectation that the score card results increase by 4% and a mid-year report from the school will be presented in February or March, seconded by Ms. Pointer-Mace. Mr. Burgos voted "no"; there were no other objections.

Meeting adjourned: 8:49 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>.