



Charter School Renewal Recommendation	
Charter School	Carmen Schools of Science and Technology: Carmen High School of Science and Technology - South Carmen Middle/High School of Science and Technology - Northwest Carmen High School of Science and Technology – Southeast Carmen Middle School of Science and Technology - South
Date of Site Visit	November 5, 2020 and November 6, 2020

The renewal recommendation is based on a thorough review and analysis of information and data from the following:

- Charter School Performance Summary
- Application for Renewal
- School Site Visit

Charter School Performance Summary		
Rating:	Met the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
Educational Performance	X	
Financial Performance	X	
Organizational Performance	X	
Summary Comments:		
<p>The mission of Carmen Schools of Science and Technology (Carmen) is to serve Milwaukee students most in need of an education that results in graduating students as critical thinkers and self-directed learners prepared for success in college, meaningful careers, community involvement, and family life.</p> <p>Please note that Carmen has four separate school locations under one contract. Carmen South HS (9-12), Carmen Southeast (9-12), Carmen Middle School South (6-8), Carmen Northwest (6-12).</p> <p>Educational Performance: Carmen has over a 90% college acceptance rate across all high school campuses. They are focused on four areas of academic performance: to create a culture of learning, essential content, academic ownership, and demonstration of learning. Students have the opportunity to participate in internships starting in grade 10.</p> <p>Carmen has rigorous academic standards for all of its students across all four campuses. All campuses are committed to nurturing, building, and sustaining academic growth. However, academic outcomes vary across each campus. The summary of each campus is noted below.</p> <p>For the 2019-20 school year, all federal and state requirements to administer academic assessments were suspended, as a result of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver granted by the Department of Education on March 23, 2020 and the Wisconsin Act 185 enacted on April 15, 2020, there were no WSAS assessments this year.</p> <p>Carmen South HS has consistently met 100% of its educational performance metrics throughout its contract term. Carmen South HS continues to rank among the top high schools in the city of</p>		

Milwaukee. Carmen South HS maintains a 95% attendance rate and continues to graduate approximately 80% of its students in 4-years, 97% of its students in 5-years, and nearly 100% of its students in 6-years. Carmen South HS significantly exceeded expectations on the state report card during the 2018-19 school year.

Carmen Northwest continues to show improvement in its educational performance metrics. Carmen Northwest has met 72% of its educational performance metrics, an increase from prior years. Carmen Northwest maintains a 94% attendance rate and continues to graduate approximately 73% of its students in 4-years, 95% of its students in 5-years, and nearly 85% of its students in 6-years. Carmen Northwest met expectations on its state report card during the 2018-19 school year. It should be noted that this was an improvement from prior report card.

Carmen Northwest has partnered with MATC to provide a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program for its students interested in the healthcare field.

Carmen Southeast graduated its first class in spring 2020. Carmen Southeast was established in fall 2016, starting with grade 9 and growing a grade each year. Carmen Southeast has met 70% of its educational performance metrics. The 2018-19 school year was the first year of the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) to be administered for the ACT as this was the year for baseline data. Carmen Southeast maintains a 94% attendance rate. Carmen Southeast has met expectations on the state report card during the 2018-19 school year.

Carmen South MS was established in fall 2018, starting with grade 6 and growing a grade each year. Carmen South MS students showed promising results on the first year of the WSAS test in both reading and math in grade 6. In its first year with available data, Carmen South Middle School has met 86% of the educational performance metrics in the contract. Carmen South MS has maintained a 98% attendance rate. Carmen South MS received a satisfactory progress on the alternative rating state report card during the 2018-19 school year.

Financial Performance:

Carmen has met its financial performance standards throughout the contract term and has demonstrated a sound organization. Carmen has not demonstrated any deficits and all audits demonstrate unmodified compliance performance.

Funds are used to support students, teachers, and family needs. The school leadership, board, and staff are doing commendable work in this area.

(move this sentence up) Carmen has an active board of directors that have raised funds for families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Carmen's financial performance has been strong with no areas of concern. They have focused on two strategic objectives: maintain adequate working capital to cover operational expenses in the even of an interruption in cash flow, and, fund current and future organizational growth.

Organizational Performance:

Carmen has consistently met 90% of its organizational performance metrics. The area that was not met, across all campuses, was with respect to the immunizations under health and safety due to the state's requirements of 99.9% compliant. However, Carmen has systems in place to ensure students have the appropriate immunizations or waivers in place.

Carmen has an effective and impactful organizational structure in place. Carmen has a sound organizational structure with an active and diverse board of directors. The Carmen board president, along with the Chief Educational Officer (CEO) are intentionally pursuing people of color to serve on the board to address specific areas of need across the organization, and to better reflect the students

and families served. The focus on maximizing board members' talents to support Carmen reveals assets-based thinking and a willingness to actively engage all board members towards a common mission.

Carmen actively engages its students and families through a variety of ways: weekly surveys, student led conferences, CEO Coffee Meetings, weekly live virtual events, weekly communications from the CEO, weekly communications from school principals, family orientation, back to school night, and college visits. The results of the surveys indicated a high degree of satisfaction from families and students.

Application for Renewal

Met the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
<p>The Application for Renewal provides <i>clear, concise and compelling information</i> in the areas of Educational, Financial and Organizational Performance. The school has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Included ample evidence of increased student achievement or shown continuous improvement; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provided credible examples and documented evidence of its financial performance; and <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrated sufficiently and convincingly that it is organizationally sound. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school's plans for continued success are clearly and effectively outlined with full details, descriptions, and explanations. 	<p>The Application for Renewal <i>does not provide clear, concise and compelling information</i> in the areas of Educational, Financial and Organizational Performance. The school did not satisfactorily address application components. Responses lack details. Descriptions and/or examples are underdeveloped. The school provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient evidence of increased student achievement or continuous improvement; <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear examples and evidence of its financial performance; and <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate evidence that it is organizationally sound. <input type="checkbox"/> The school's plans for continued success are unclear and not fully described or developed.
Carmen has met all components of its application for renewal based on the above criteria.	

Summary Comments:

Carmen South HS was established as a non-instrumentality charter school in 2007. In 2013, Carmen Northwest opened its doors serving students in grades 6 through 9 and growing a grade level each year. Then, in 2016, Carmen Southeast was established starting with grade 9 and growing a grade level each year. Carmen Southeast graduated its first class in spring 2020. Finally, in 2018, Carmen South Middle School opened starting with grade 6 and growing a grade level each year up to grade 8.

Carmen's educational model has three core components: 1.) college preparatory curricula that emphasizes science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); 2.) multiple intervention opportunities to support Carmen students who enter middle or high school two or more years behind in literacy and math skills; and 3.) a college and career-readiness program that includes college seminars for all juniors and seniors, an advisory curriculum facilitated by teachers, student internships in the workplace, character education, and related elements.

Carmen included ample evidence of increased student achievement and continuous improvement. It provided evidence of the ways in which the school is preparing students to be critical thinkers and self-directed learners. Carmen has proven itself to be academically successful and believes that all students can learn and are able to pursue college and careers of their choice. Carmen has over a 90% acceptance rate for its students and the school community prepares and supports students beyond high school.

One area of concern, based on previous reviews, was the academic performance of Carmen Northwest. Based on the data through the term of the contract, progress has been made in this area. However, there still remains a gap in performance compared to Carmen South and Southeast campuses. Carmen is committed to closing these gaps and has developed systems to focus on the

data, collaborate across campus, and provide content area cross-curricular planning across grade levels and campuses. In addition, the improved score on the state report card and the data projections showed that there was promise for continued growth and improvement.

Carmen’s special education enrollment is lower compared to the district. Carmen accepts all students and has a lottery system in place for those on the wait-list. It should be noted that Carmen recruits’ students from outside Milwaukee Public Schools from surrounding charter and voucher schools. Due to the disproportionality among the voucher and charter schools in the city of Milwaukee, the enrollment of students with disabilities is lower. However, Carmen is actively recruiting all students, specifically welcoming students with disabilities to its program.

Carmen provided credible examples and documented evidence of its financial performance. Carmen’s financial audits have consistently demonstrated strong financial performance.

Carmen illustrated sufficiently and convincingly that it is organizationally sound. Carmen engages its students and parents in meaningful ways. Carmen has a number of community partners that directly benefit the students and families. Marquette University, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, and Alverno College partner with Carmen to provide staff professional development and collaborate on curriculum, instruction, and culture. Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) partners with Carmen to provide dual enrollment opportunities for students. Carmen Northwest also provides certified nursing instruction to families who are interested in pursuing the medical field at Carmen.

Carmen’s plans for continued success are clearly and effectively outlined with full details, descriptions and explanations. Due to the high interest of Carmen’s programming, the school is seeking to increase its numbers. It should be noted that due to the building capacity at some of these sites, the issue of space will likely need to be addressed to meet this growth and desired needs of the students and families.

School Site Visit

Met the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
<p>Charter school site visit provided excellent further evidence that the school is meeting performance standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School presentations clearly and effectively communicated information from its Application for Renewal. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School sufficiently addressed any issues/concerns raised by the MPS Charter School Contract Review Team members. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School (if appropriate) provided sufficient supplementary information to further clarify performance results and ratings. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Samples of student work and classroom visits reflect strongly and positively the school’s teaching and learning practices. 	<p>Charter school site visit did not provide compelling evidence that the school is meeting performance standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> School presentations insufficiently communicated information from its Application for Renewal. <input type="checkbox"/> School did not adequately address issues/concerns raised by the MPS Charter School Contract Review Team members. <input type="checkbox"/> School did not provide ample supplementary information to clarify performance results and ratings. <input type="checkbox"/> Samples of student work and classroom visits did not necessarily positively reflect the school’s teaching and learning practices.
<p>Carmen has met all components of its site visit based on the above criteria.</p>	

Summary Comments:

The Charter School Review Team spent one and half days in a virtual site visit across all four Carmen campuses. During this time, the Team heard testimony from students, parents/guardians, alumni, teachers, and board members and were engaged in a presentation that included stakeholders, as well as, review data and other artifacts provided by Carmen Schools. The Team had the opportunity to participate in virtual classroom visits at a variety of grade levels at each school.

Carmen clearly and effectively communicated information from its application for renewal, including historical information, reaffirming that the school admissions process is non-selective, and the school remains committed to its goal of graduating all students as self-thinkers. Carmen highlighted its commitment to its mission and demonstrated a strong and unwavering commitment to families. It was clear how the educational, financial, and organizational elements are interconnected in order to support the mission in a meaningful and relevant manner.

Carmen has a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) focus, but it also offers art, music, sports, advanced placement courses, and other opportunities such as extended day, dual enrollment, community service, and career readiness programming. In addition, the Carmen board of directors have established a COVID relief support for its families.

Carmen's presentation provided further detail regarding the unique "to and through" college program. This program monitors, follows, and offers support for Carmen graduates and contributes to Carmen's success in post high school experiences for students. Carmen has a number of community partners that share in the mission to help prepare students for careers, specifically that of the internship opportunities with surrounding businesses and the CNA training program at the Northwest campus.

Carmen implements a Carmen Essentials program, which seeks to improve teacher performance and result in continued student performance across all campuses. Leaders and teachers shared the mission and data which illustrated a positive impact of this new program.

Carmen sufficiently address any issues/concerns raised by the Team. Some of the concerns raised included academic performance, specifically Carmen Northwest compared to Carmen South and Southeast, and enrollment of students with disabilities. The school did not offer an excuse, but rather, accepted feedback and provided responses that indicated that they are actively taking steps to make improvements to respond to these areas of concerns. Some concerns, such as the long wait-list and limited seats due to the facility space, are a part of a long-term plan that Carmen and its board of directors are considering for the future.

The classroom visits provided further evidence of instruction that engaged students in higher level thinking tasks. The classroom visits demonstrated high attendance and active engagement across all campuses. The lessons provided opportunities for discussions and high-level thinking.

It was evident that through the student focus groups, that students felt supported by their teachers. A few spoke about the benefit of the advisory cohorts and the family type environment it has developed. The alumni maintain meaningful connections with the school. They often times return to the school for assistance in college work as well as provide shared experiences with other students. Students indicated that they felt safe, cared for, and a part of a family at Carmen. Students felt that teachers pushed them to understand and to do better. Not only did students feel supported by the teachers, but by their peers as they pushed each other to do better.

Students indicated that they felt well-prepared for the next level of their education, whether high school or college. The majority of the students in the middle grade level indicated that they would like to continue at Carmen High School. It was also observed that the majority of students, even at the lower grade levels, had already begun to study career paths. Below are some student testimonies:

Teachers are interested in what I am interested in. Carmen is really good because they take an interest in what I like. I have not experienced the same at other schools.

My advisor is like a missing parent that you never thought you would find in life.

I feel supported at school, especially when I'm ready to give up. Everyone pushes me and they

got your back, especially my advisor.

I like Carmen because it's a small school and we have advisory included in our school system to show they support us as they advisor stays with us until we graduate high school. They support us and provides insight on college and its importance, especially being a first-generation college student. They always tell us that college is possible and prepared us through internship opportunities, college level courses, and a college boot camp. They even help with finding financial aid.

As a special education student, Carmen goes 100% out of their way to support me and my needs, especially in preparing for the Advanced Placement exams. The staff and teachers do everything to ensure that you succeed.

While attending a predominately Hispanic school and when I go to college, I'll be with people that don't even know me. Even though most of the staff members are white, they go out of their way to understand us as a minority and provide us with the help that we need.

Some students expressed concerns and hopes for increased student groups, sports, and events. Students also expressed interest in a larger building to accommodate the high school environment and resources. Students would also like to be involved in state STEM programs and more student led events. They would also like to see more extracurricular activities such as choir and theater. Students from all campuses indicated that they would like more opportunities to engage in cross-campus activities within the Carmen network. For students at Southeast, they expressed interest in more combined events (other than sports) with Pulaski students.

Based on both student and parent testimonies, Carmen does an excellent job of engaging families in its community. This family involvement is apparent with the relationships built with the teachers, the inclusion of family in the schools in numerous ways. Carmen contacted all families when the schools closed due to COVID-19. Beyond this, there are weekly surveys provided to students, staff, and families to check on the needs. Below are some parent testimonies:

I really appreciated how Carmen stepped up during COVID, the teachers are like cheerleaders, the classes are structured and set up for students to succeed. Carmen took the time to prepare during this situation and the teachers are always very bubbly.

Carmen has provided the most wonderful staff that could be imagined. Teachers provide support and the communication is phenomenal. They are always providing information on what you need to know. My son has an IEP and the teachers go out of their way to help my son, even during Packer games on Sunday.

Charter School Review Team Renewal Recommendation

X	Full-Term Term of 5 Years	<p>To be eligible, schools must be in the last year of the contract term and have achieved the following: <i>There is a strong and compelling record of evidence that the school met or exceeded the performance standards in the areas of Educational Performance, Financial Performance, and Organizational Performance.</i></p> <p><u>Guidelines for Recommending Five-Year Renewal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Team determines that a school primarily merits <i>Met the Standard</i> ratings in the performance areas. A school that receives mixed ratings may be recommended for a full five-year renewal term if sufficient additional evidence obtained from the school's Application for Renewal and School Site Visit make this a credible recommendation.
	Short-Term Term of 3 Years	<p>To be eligible, schools must be in the last year of the contract term and have achieved the following: <i>There is a strong and compelling record of evidence that the school met or exceeded a considerable number of the performance standards in the areas of Educational Performance, Financial Performance, and Organizational Performance and/or shows continuous, meaningful improvement toward meeting the performance standards.</i></p> <p><u>Guidelines for Recommending Three-Year Renewal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Team determines that a school primarily merits <i>Met the Standard</i> ratings or demonstrates continuous and meaningful improvement in the performance areas. A school that receives mixed ratings may be recommended for a three-year renewal term if evidence obtained from the school's Application for Renewal and School Site Visit make this a credible recommendation.
	Non-Renewal / Revocation	<p><i>The school does not apply for renewal or the school's educational, financial, and/or organizational performance results do not meet defined standards and are deemed unsatisfactory. This would result in a recommendation for non-renewal/revocation.</i></p> <p><u>Guidelines for Recommending Non-Renewal / Revocation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school receives a <i>Did Not Meet the Standard</i> in all three areas of performance. A school that receives mixed ratings may be recommended for non-renewal/revocation if evidence obtained from the school's Performance Summary, Application for Renewal, and School Site Visit make this a credible recommendation.

Summary Comments:

The Charter School Review is recommending a full-term charter contract renewal for Carmen Schools. Carmen is a strong organization and it is financially sound. Carmen is a solid partner with Milwaukee Public Schools in serving students in MPS. The majority of Carmen schools have met their educational performance measures throughout the term of their partnership with MPS.

Carmen continues to do well in preparing students for academic success towards college and career readiness. Carmen Northwest has proven positive growth towards its academic performance. Carmen South continues to demonstrate sound academic performance. Carmen Southeast, graduating its first class in Spring 2020, is showing positive trends in its performance. Carmen South Middle School is only in year three and has demonstrated it has promising academic achievement. Carmen has established systems relating to staff, professional development, and curriculum that should maintain or increase growth in the areas of academic performance. Similarly, Carmen has and continues to address concerns relating to students with disabilities and disproportionate outcomes of the Northwest campus compared to South.

Carmen has established teaching practices to ensure students become critical thinkers and life-long learners. They strongly believe that every student is prepared to attend a college or university of their choice. They not only prepare students for college, but provide support through college. They are innovative and focused on improvement. The staff, students, families, board of directors, and community partners share the same mission and vision. This has shown a positive impact on the outcomes of the program.

Carmen may have to address concerns relating to space moving forward to ensure they meet the demand for programming as well as the desires of students and families. However, the school has indicated that it understands the concerns and has demonstrated a willingness to work on the concern moving forward.

Carmen offers a strong educational program and numerous opportunities for its students and families as well as an opportunity for growth in these areas moving forward. There is a high demand for this program, as evident by the wait-lists. The student's and families, as well as staff, have indicated that there is a strong and positive school culture. They feel cared for, supported, and part of a family at Carmen across all four campuses. As there is still work to be done along with areas of growth and improvement, Carmen has demonstrated an increased desire to collaborate with MPS, a positive mindset and a willingness to continue to grow and succeed.

Carmen is passionately invested in educating the whole child and supporting the whole family. A significant number of parents/guardians and students are highly pleased with their Carmen experience across all campuses. They all highlighted the individualized support, care, concern, and compassion they have received, particularly during the pandemic. Carmen will need to continue its focus on equitable outcomes across all campuses. The work of Carmen on behalf of students, families and staff is highly commendable, greatly appreciated, and sincerely needed.

It is for these reason that the Team is recommending a full-term, five-year renewal for Carmen Schools.

MPS Charter School Review Team Members

Richard Anderson	MPS Contract Law Coordinator
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Signature: *Bridget Schock* Date: November 6, 2020
Bridget Schock, Contracted School Services