



MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Office of School Administration
Department of Contracted School Services
5225 W. Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53208
(414) 475-8140 • mps.milwaukee.k12.wi.us
Fax (414) 475-8471

MPS Charter School Contract Review Team Comments and Renewal Recommendation

Name of Charter School: The Alliance School of Milwaukee Date: November 30, 2016

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

- Charter School Performance Summary – Educational, Financial, and Organizational Standards
- Application for Renewal
- School Site Visit

Charter School Performance Summary		
Standards	Met the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
Educational Performance Rating		X
Financial Performance Rating	X	
Organizational Performance Rating	X	
Summary Comments on Performance Ratings:		
<p>Educational Performance: There is evidence that Alliance has shown growth and meaningful improvement toward meeting the performance standards. Alliance is developing systems that leads to best practices in the classroom by creating Think Tanks in literacy, math, and restorative practices that collaborate and share best practices and cross-curricular alignment. Students are being asked to synthesize and there is some consistency in discourse, student engagement, and higher level thinking. Alliance has the potential to move in the direction of academic achievement if they consistently implement rigor in the classroom. Evidence of community, respect and rapport among teachers and students was very clear and noted from personal accolades, communication and visuals throughout the building and in the classroom. Level of engagement in core academics and elective experiences was supported through the criteria for success as identified in the schools literacy plan and instructional lesson plans by individual teachers. Even though the academic performance is not at the level it needs to be, Alliance has proven that the academics matter as much as the social-emotional support for students. The school leadership team has used reflective practices to analyze data and make necessary changes to benefit students. This is demonstrated by looking at passing rate of students in mathematics who were taking algebra and geometry simultaneously. After analyzing the data where students were unsuccessful in the past, they have revised the course schedule to reflect students receiving extended time in one of the core math courses, which includes interventions built into the schedule.</p> <p>Financial Performance: The general financial practices of Alliance have changed positively, as demonstrated by the MPS audit. Recommendations from the audit were considered and implemented by the Teacher Leader whom has fully utilized support from the Office of Finance.</p>		

Organizational Performance:

The current Teacher Leader has been in this position since the fall of 2016. Per the recommendation of the Board, Alliance has had an Assistant Principal at the school since fall 2015 to assist in putting systems in place. The Teacher Leader has worked collaboratively with the Assistant Principal to create an environment that embraces the social-emotional and academic needs of the students. Alliance embraces parents by providing multiple opportunities for becoming involved. Parents are invited to participate in restorative practice circles, financial literacy and resume writing workshops, and other community events throughout the year. Alliance partners with The Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin, Arts@Large, The Milwaukee LGBTQ Community Center, Diverse and Resilient, and Pathfinders of Milwaukee to support the various needs of students in the school community.

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"> • Included ample evidence of increased student achievement or shown continuous improvement; • Provided credible examples and documented evidence of its financial performance; • Illustrated sufficiently and convincingly that it is organizationally sound; and • 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 the application components. Responses lack details. Descriptions and/or examples are underdeveloped. The school provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient evidence of increased student achievement or continuous improvement; • Unclear examples and evidence of its financial performance; • Inadequate evidence that it is organizationally sound; and • The school’s plans for continued success are unclear and not fully described or developed.
X	
Summary Comments on the Application for Renewal:	
<p>The mission of Alliance is to provide a safe, student-centered, and academically challenging environment to meet the needs of all students. The school believes in the democratic governance process and includes all stake-holders in the decision making process. Restorative Practices have been an important part of the Alliance community as students and staff provide training within the district and other community organizations. They describe a safe and supportive educational environment meant to foster a sense of belonging and love amongst students and staff. The school leaders have experienced changes within the last school year to balance positive social emotional culture and academics throughout the building.</p> <p>Alliance included some evidence of increased student achievement and has shown some improvement. Some time is needed to see the true impact of these changes, but it appears to be moving in a positive direction. They have plans in place to improve upon student achievement by implementing the strategies developed in the literacy, math, and restorative practices Think Tanks in the classroom. Academics is where they will need to focus their energy and efforts in the upcoming years and build upon the positive learning environment they have already created. Alliance offers a number of Advanced Placement (AP) courses, however, there is a concern for the number of students that take and pass the AP exam. They provide freshmen with a double-dose of both math and English, which extends the amount of instructional time students receive in these subjects. An Aquaponics Lab has been implemented to promote inquiry-based learning. There is an integration of technology in the classroom to enhance learning opportunities for students.</p>	

Alliance has provided evidence of meaningful community partners that are having an impact on the students they serve. The school is working collaboratively with parents to create meaningful opportunities for them to become engaged in their student’s learning.

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

Summary Comments on the School Site Visit:

Alliance provided a thorough and compelling presentation, complimented with overwhelming support from outside organizations, parents, and students. It is clear that they have had a tremendous impact on the lives of many students over the years. Staff and students all spoke a common language of support, compassion, and positive experiences that extend beyond the classroom. The school offers a number of Advanced Placement courses, however, the school needs to make a slight shift from not just offering academic opportunities for students, but towards focusing on what can be done to make academic improvements with their students. Because they are small, they have a great opportunity to work individually with their students and focus their academic efforts. Alliance has started to take more ownership over their academic performance and use the weakness in their school data as areas to focus on and target for improvement as demonstrated by the programming of students in a “double-dose” of math and literacy at ninth grade.

The students and staff gave examples of the school’s focus and exemplars were shared on how the school was meeting the needs of students academically, socially and emotionally, and college and career supports preparing them for years after high school. Alliance offers blended learning, experiential and project based learning to enhance the learning experiences for students. Through community partnerships, the school works with the young people to meet the social and emotional needs by providing homeless supports, counseling, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Transgender (LGBTQ) support. Alliance offers Advanced Placement (AP) courses and college tours to prepare students to be college and career ready.

There was evidence through some of the samples of student work and classroom visits that reflected strong and positive social justice, efficacy and advocacy platforms, which are part of the school’s teaching and learning practices. The students interviewed had a strong connection with teachers and staff at Alliance. Students indicated that Alliance was a welcoming environment that felt like a family. Students described Alliance as a school that was fulfilling, supporting and understanding. Students overwhelmingly indicated that Restorative Practices allowed an opportunity to feel challenged due to the ability to repair harm and

resolve conflict within the school and community. Teachers have expectations for students and provide feedback to students.

Alliance provided evidence that they are working on addressing the gaps and path to meeting the standard. The school has a large population of students with disabilities and students exposed to trauma relative to its size. The school could use data, by subgroups, to compare growth of the different student groups to ensure the needs of all students are being met, not just academically, but socially and emotionally.

Renewal Recommendation by MPS Charter School Contract Review Team

The renewal recommendation for **The Alliance School of Milwaukee** is:

Full-term Renewal Term of Five Years	Short-term Renewal Term of Three Years	Non-Renewal/ Revocation
	X	

Renewal Recommendation Rationale:

Alliance has shown some gains since the last renewal cycle. There have been systems put in place that reflects the efforts of collaboration among the Teacher Leader, Assistant Principal, and staff. The Charter School Review Team recognizes the unique population that Alliance serves. Both students and staff respect the diverse population of learners and embrace the differences of the students. Alliance offers an environment that is safe and respectful. Students are given opportunities to experience leadership and show initiative through participation and facilitation of Restorative Practices. There are positive teacher relationships that support the safe and nurturing environment.

The school is becoming more reflective in their practices and has made some changes based on the data through the new leadership. The leadership at Alliance is transparent in the decision making process and values the democratic process. Alliance has shown growth in academic performance and recognizes the need to improve the overall academic rigor in the classroom. Alliance is at the initiating stages of implementing more experiential, inquiry-based learning opportunities in all classrooms to develop critical thinking skills.

The MPS Charter School Contract Review Team recommends that the school establish more ambitious goals that will show the impact the school is having on students in both academics and social emotional growth. Alliance offers a number of Advanced Placements (AP) courses for students with a high participation rate; however, there is a low percentage of students who take the AP exam and who have passed the exam. The school has shown improvement in the English Language Arts ACT data.

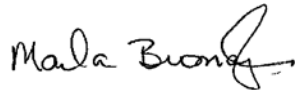
Alliance has a number of community partners that support the students. The community partners work in collaboration with the school to determine the needs of the student population which are integrated either into the curriculum, advisory, enrichment, or referrals. The parents that spoke on behalf of Alliance shared a passion for the way the school has embraced students and made a difference in their child. Alliance students, at all grade levels, participate in college visits. In spring, student representatives from Alliance hope to provide Restorative Practice training at Harvard.

The three year renewal was based on evidence of an inclusive environment focused on equity. The school has ways of leveraging these relationships and the culture to improve rigor. Community engagement, student independence, invitation to present at Harvard, restorative practices, and the success of the alumni were all highlights of Alliance. The Teacher Leader recognizes the need to provide a more academically

rigorous experience for students and is committed to working with all stake-holders to ensure this becomes a reality.

MPS Charter School Review Team Members:

Name of Team Member	Affiliation of Team Member
Buck, Nuntiata	MPS, Curriculum Specialist
Campbell, Gene	MPS, Specialized Services
Feaster, Lauren	Community Member
Harris, Wendell	Board Director
Hill, Dorneesha	Community Member
Jasper-Mitchell, Felecia	MPS, Finance
Kawala, Jill	Office of Board Governance
Latterman, Robert	MPS, Assessment
Mahan, Gayle	MPS, RtI and PBIS
Muriuki, Andrew	MPS, Research
Schock, Bridget	MPS, Contracted School Services
Woodward, Annie	Board Director



Signature: _____

Date: December 1, 2016

Marla Bronaugh, Director Office of Contracted School Services