



The Alliance School of Milwaukee

850 West Walnut Street

Milwaukee, WI 53205

(414) 267-5400

August 7, 2024

Dear Charter Review Committee,

This letter is to inform you of our intent to seek a 5-year renewal of our contract with Milwaukee Public School.

For over 19 years, the Alliance High School of Milwaukee has provided a vital service to students in MPS and the Milwaukee area. Our mission is to be a safe, student-centered, and academically challenging environment where we prepare young people to become compassionate agents of change. We continue to serve unique students from diverse backgrounds that only Alliance can serve. We provide a safe place, particularly for students with high social, and emotional needs, and LGBTQAI+ students as no other school in the district provides this service. Furthermore, the school has undergone some changes since the last charter review. Alliance has implemented a new mentoring program to support our overaged under-credit students, to help increase our graduation rate. This year, the mentoring program for the 2024-25 school year will also focus on the freshman class to support them as they transition into high school to avoid becoming credit deficient and have a successful high school experience. The new mentoring program will support our goal of overall improvement in our school, which will help increase our academic performance and graduation rate. The staff is committed to making this school a better institution and striving to become the first choice of MPS charter schools.

Based on the rationale above we seek a 5-year renewal of our instrumentality contract.

Thank you, for your consideration.

Sincerely,

School Leader: Phyllis D. Smith

School Gov. Body Board President: Karen Schoen



The Alliance School of Milwaukee

850 W Walnut St. Milwaukee, WI 53205

(414)-267-5400

30 August 2024

Dear Milwaukee Public Schools' Charter Review Committee,

This letter is to inform you of our intent to seek a 5-year renewal of our charter contract with Milwaukee Public Schools.

Since 2005, the Alliance School of Milwaukee has been serving the diverse Milwaukee community in partnership with Milwaukee Public Schools. Alliance's mission is to provide a safe, student-centered, and academically challenging environment. This environment allows students to grow as individuals and learners without fear of being harassed, excluded, or bullied for their exploration and openness about their identity. At the time of Alliance's founding, this unique concept and school were rare. Now, nineteen years later, we continue to uphold our founding mission at the heart of our school. We strive to be a safe haven for unique students from diverse backgrounds, particularly for LGBTQIA+ and bullied students. As no other school in the district specifically caters to these students, the need for Alliance is as strong as ever, and it remains important to the community.

Alliance has undergone some changes since its founding, including leadership restructuring, to honor its vision and mission. The vision is to close the opportunity gap through high-level and student-led instruction, a strong and committed staff, and programs that create safe spaces for all students, their families, and the community. The mission is to be a safe, student-centered, and academically challenging environment where we prepare young people to become compassionate agents of change. Alliance uses data-driven decision making and experiential knowledge to implement academic and school cultural changes, including afterschool tutoring, mentoring, and small groups focused on historically underserved students. Restorative Practices have been restructured to improve instructional outcomes, graduation rates, meet student needs,

and address academic and cultural concerns. These changes have provided positive effects and improved the school overall.

This charter agreement will allow us to continue our work to provide a safe space that fosters learning, acquisition of knowledge, encourages higher-order thinking, empathy, and other skills needed to create lifelong learners prepared for the wider world. Based on the rationale above, we seek a 5-year renewal of our instrumentality contract. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ms. Smith APIC

Alliance Charter School Application Current Charter School Performance

The Alliance School is a small, democratically run, Instrumentality charter school opened in 2005, as the first school in the nation to start with a mission of reducing bullying. At our inception, we were at the forefront of providing a safe educational space for LGBTQIA+ youth. Our work has continued to this day, and we continue to lead the way in gender inclusion practices locally and nationally.

Additionally, we are often consulted to share our expertise in gender inclusion practices, trauma-informed care, student-led learning, and restorative practices both within the district and beyond. Many of the practices we have successfully implemented from our inception are recognized as best practices across the nation in educational settings.

Over the past three years, approximately 50% of the students at Alliance self-identify as LGBTQIA and 41.3% of students at Alliance are students with disabilities. During this timeframe, the district maintained an average of 21.3% student disability rate. Currently, Alliance has the highest percentage of students with disabilities at the high school level in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) with 39.2%.

The following two demographic groups exhibit a disproportionately high susceptibility to victimization within conventional school environments. Given that a majority of Alliance students have encountered such victimization prior to their enrollment at the school, Alliance School confronts the distinct challenge of addressing the resultant educational and emotional setbacks, thereby offering an invaluable service within the Milwaukee Public Schools' community. The school community is steadfast in its commitment to cultivating students' trust in the institution while concurrently equipping them with the academic and behavioral proficiencies essential for post-secondary education.

Furthermore, Alliance consists of approximately 82% of students facing economic disadvantages, compared to 75% across the district. In 2024, 15% of students at Alliance were in Out of Home Care (OHC), while only 3% across MPS were reportedly in OHC. Additionally, 18% of Alliance students were placed in the Homeless Education Program (HEP) compared to 6% in MPS. The lack of household stability often leads to educational challenges, academic and social disadvantage.

Over the past three years, Alliance has encountered triumphs and obstacles. Though minor,

Alliance lauds its advancements, such as increased enrollment from 133 students in 2021 to 155 students in 2023, as per the Third Friday count. Additionally, there has been a decline in the churn rate from 47.2% in 2021-2022 to 43.9% in 2023-2024, representing the comprehensive percentage of students who either enrolled late or withdrew prematurely. Furthermore, there has been an increase in the percentage of proficient students by 1.2% in Reading and 14.5% in Mathematics from the Spring 2023 to the Spring 2024 Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading (STAR) examination. Participation in the PreACT has elevated by 18.5%, and in ACT by 3.9% from 2023 to 2024. Additionally, there has been a 6% increase in the fulfillment of graduation prerequisites from 2023 to 2024, a 3.4% enhancement in the attendance rate from 2023 to 2024, and Alliance has exceeded 80% on the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI). Lastly, in the last two years of Financial Literacy competitions, all Alliance teams have secured places in the top three citywide, and last year, one team qualified and participated in the state competition.

Our organization remains steadfast and deeply committed to confronting new challenges through its dedicated staff and innovative programs. Our primary dedication lies in catering to some of the most complex and challenging students within our community. We firmly believe that we provide an indispensable service to our students – a unique educational experience that cannot be replicated elsewhere in Wisconsin, offering them a sense of acceptance and support.

Suicide and Mental Health Issues

Suicide is currently the second leading cause of death for those aged 10 to 24 according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Indeed, in only the previous 20 years, the number of young people who die by suicide has increased by over 50%. This rise in deaths by suicide corresponds to increasing rates of mood disorders in children and adolescents. Per the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), more than half of all Wisconsin students report experiencing anxiety, while over a third report significant symptoms of depression. Survey results from the YRBS show that the number of students who experience anxiety and depressive symptoms have increased by 10% just since 2017.

While the potential causes of these trends remain speculative, it does appear that belonging to at-risk groups substantially increases one's likelihood to suffer from mental health issues and struggle with suicidal ideation. At uniquely high risk are LGBTQIA+ youth, who over the course of decades continue to attempt and to die by suicide at rates far greater than their peers. Indeed, the 2023 YRBS survey shows that, in Wisconsin, there is no other group of students at higher risk for

experiencing anxiety, depression, or engaging in non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) than LGBTQIA+ students. In Milwaukee Public Schools (using data from 2023), LGBTQIA+ students are three times more likely to consider suicide, make a plan to die by suicide, and attempt to die by suicide than their straight/cisgender peers.

Students who don't identify as LGBTQIA+ but belong to other disadvantaged, underserved, or marginalized groups are also at greater risk for mental health issues. According to the CDC, individuals with disabilities are three times more likely to report suicidal ideation and nearly five times more likely to be experiencing mental distress than those without disabilities. Adolescents who experience bullying are more likely to engage in NSSI, contemplate suicide, and attempt to die by suicide than their peers. Being the victim of bullying can increase student's feeling of thwarted belongingness, one of two crucial factors that lead to suicidal ideation according to Joiner's Interpersonal Theory of Suicide. To what degree being the victim of bullying increases the risk of dying by suicide remains unclear, although the CDC and the corpus of peer reviewed research agree that it is substantial.

These at-risk groups are all overrepresented at Alliance. Indeed, over the previous four years, Alliance High School has conducted more risk assessments per capita than any other school in MPS (141 schools were included in the dataset). What is abundantly clear is that (a) students are experiencing a mental health crisis in our country, state, and district, (b) certain groups report higher rates of mental health symptoms and suicidal ideation, and (c) that Alliance High School disproportionately serves students who are at higher risk of suffering from mental health symptoms.

Despite these dire facts, Alliance High School was, and remains, uniquely qualified to support at-risk students and provide them with the highest quality mental health support possible. Our school is welcoming to all with the knowledge that every student deserves to feel valued and have a sense of belonging. We are known for eschewing many teacher/student power dynamics, leading to positive, supportive relationships between young people and Alliance staff. Despite being a smaller school, we have invested in a full-time social worker, full-time school counselor, and substantial school psychologist time. We invest significant resources to training its staff; in just the previous academic year, Alliance faculty received hour long professional development trainings with topics including suicidality, behavior modification, restorative practices, psychopathology in the classroom, teacher-child interaction therapy, and the science of trauma. But most of all, we believe that, for our most at-risk students in MPS, mental health support is a crucial part of a

comprehensive and rigorous education.

Bullying and Harassment

Students who identify as LGBTQIA+ risk of bullying, harassment and assault than their heterosexual, cisgender peers. As a result, the negative experiences of our LGBTQIA+ students are increasing nationwide. The 2021 GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, Straight Educators Network) National School Climate Survey reported the following about our nation's LGBTQIA+ students:

- 68% of students felt unsafe at school
- 76% were verbally harassed in the past year
- 31% were physically harassed
- 13% were physically assaulted
- 32% missed at least one entire day because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable
- 59% had experienced LGBTQIA+-related discriminatory policies or practices at school.

While these statistics are disheartening, there is hope. According to this same 2021 survey by GLSEN, compared to LGBTQIA+ students with few (if any) supportive school staff, students with many (11 or more) supportive staff at their school:

- Felt safer regardless of their sexual orientation (64% vs. 35%), gender expression (52% vs 33%) and gender (48% vs 30%)
- Were twice as likely to regularly attend school because they felt safe or comfortable (42% vs 20%)
- Felt greater belonging to their school community
- Performed better academically in school and were more likely to plan on pursuing post-secondary education
- Reported better psychological wellbeing: higher levels of self-esteem, lower levels of depression, and lower likelihood of having seriously considered suicide in the past year.

Educational Program

Our educational program is designed around the following currently embedded best practices:

- Safe Learning Environment
- Restorative Practices
- Inquiry Based Learning
- Experiential Learning
- Blended learning

- Additional practices

Safe Learning Environment

Safety is a crucial aspect of any productive and educational environment. When students feel physically and emotionally secure, they are better able to engage fully in the learning process and take educational risks. At The Alliance School, we are committed to fostering inclusion, promoting the well-being of our students, and prioritize the safety of our students. We recognize that many of them come from environments where bullying and harassment are prevalent, and adolescents often face mental health challenges. Additionally, LGBTQIA+ students are embraced and welcomed as indispensable members of our Alliance community and feel safe and accepted, and because of that they can thrive in high school rather than just survive. Our staff is committed to fostering inclusion and promoting the well-being of our students.

We achieve this safe environment through multiple practices including but not limited to:

- Full inclusion for students with special needs
- Gender neutral facilities
- Access to Full time Support Staff (School Safety, School Social Worker, and School Psychologist)
- Positive Student Teacher Relationships to foster a collaborative learning environment and open communication
- Bringing student concerns about district policies to MPS administration
- Staff advocate for LGBTQIA+ students in every school in the district by providing consultation with colleagues and district policy recommendations
- Honoring student voice and choice
- Established community partnerships
- Gender-Support Alliance (GSA)

Restorative Practices

The Alliance School of Milwaukee staff and students continue to make the commitment to embed Restorative Practices into our classrooms and culture. This approach is vital for fostering a strong and supportive community, developing positive relationships, and ultimately enhancing social capital, achieving social discipline, and improving human behavior. Additionally, we firmly believe that restorative practices play a crucial role in repairing relationships, addressing harm, reducing the need for disciplinary intervention, and reducing violence, and bullying in schools and broader community. Students on the Student Advisory Committee will be trained as circle keepers who will

lead four school-wide circles each school year. The Climate and Culture Committee will research best practices and connect with MPS' restorative practices department to provide up to date professional development for all staff. Ms. Smith will facilitate monthly staff circles to maintain a strong educational team committed to meeting the needs of all students. Teachers will utilize restorative practices in the classroom by facilitating two times per week community building circles as well as employing a restorative approach to classroom discipline to foster a strong school community. Students who engage in conflict will be invited to participate in repair harm circles or conversations. Students re-entering the school community after absences such as suspensions, incarceration, inpatient mental health treatment, etc. will participate in a meeting with administration and/or support staff to help them reacclimate to the school community and put a plan in place for how to support them as they return to the school community.

Inquiry Based Learning

In recent years, Alliance has embraced inquiry-based learning as a fundamental teaching approach across our general curriculum. Many of our courses, such as social studies and English, utilize a blend of the Socratic Method and open-ended questioning to facilitate students' exploration of the subject matter. Additionally, our math and science courses encourage students to analyze data and develop their own questions and conclusions, granting them greater autonomy over their learning experience while still meeting specific educational standards.

Experiential Learning

The Alliance educational program promotes experiential learning to engage students across various intelligence domains and foster holistic connections. This approach encompasses Project Based Learning, immersive experiences, field trips, virtual simulations, and extracurricular activities. Projects serve as a pivotal pedagogical strategy, enabling students to independently delve into specific course aspects, thus fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

For instance, in World Languages (Spanish), students have the opportunity to research and report on the Spanish diaspora and its impact on the community. This involves employing Spanish vocabulary, elucidating the cultural influences, and visually representing their discoveries. Similarly, within the visual arts domain, students immerse themselves in diverse techniques and are empowered to express their artistic choices. In the performing arts, students are exposed to various styles and experience the world of performance through concerts, music, and theoretical studies.

Furthermore, field trips play a crucial role in providing students with alternative learning environments. Past excursions to colleges in Wisconsin, Illinois, Georgia, and Alabama, explorations of potential careers, and visits to venues such as the Milwaukee Film Festival expand students' learning beyond the confines of the traditional classroom. Moreover, students with disabilities are encouraged to participate in career exploration programs (ex. CATP) and on-the-job training (OJT) to develop interpersonal and employment skills, thereby enriching their educational experience.

Additionally, students are encouraged to enroll in courses at UWM or MATC to gain exposure to college-level curriculum and chart a path toward their future careers or interests. Finally, Alliance engages in comprehensive Financial Literacy workshops and supplementary activities, with the Alliance's Financial Literacy curriculum setting a influential standard that is incorporated across MPS.

Service Learning

Service learning enables students to apply their acquired knowledge by serving the community. Restorative Practices form the fundamental ethos of Alliance and significantly contribute to the school's culture, emphasizing the crucial role of community service.

Previously, students in our specific Restorative Practice classes engaged in service learning by instructing others in the community on leading Restorative Justice circles. However, the program's evolution emphasizes the need to integrate Restorative Practices into all aspects of the school. Consequently, the current service-learning model focuses on addressing vital community issues using data and student input to guide discussions and action plans aimed at benefiting the broader community.

In recent years, this approach has led to initiatives such as anti-vaping campaigns, environmental enhancement by removing litter, painting murals, and creating a more versatile and welcoming space. Additionally, as students mature at Alliance, they concentrate on community service through social action, including advocating policy reform and actions (e.g., reducing transphobia, removing “dead name” from Infinite Campus), dedicating time to student leadership, and supporting school staff.

Blended Learning

The staff at Alliance has been at the forefront of teaching and learning through the use of technology and blended learning. Blended learning has enabled educators to effectively customize learning experiences, expand the global reach of education, and facilitate practical application of skills for students. The significance of blended learning heightened during the quarantine period and extended school closures due to the increased prevalence of mental health concerns among students, leading to missed classes or requiring additional learning time. Furthermore, there was a rise in skill gaps and deficits resulting from disrupted instructional time, as well as an increased demand for online resources to enhance the curriculum.

The majority of Alliance teachers utilize Google Classroom and the Google suite of applications to provide students with comprehensive tools, including Google Read Write, dictionary, various calculators, ensuring that learning is accessible to students of all proficiency levels. Families can also monitor task completion, learning progress, and view real-time grades from home, fostering greater parental involvement. Additionally, Google Classroom and the suite, are used for schoolwide learning events, such as write days, promoting uniform access to materials, collaborative opportunities among stakeholders, and enabling teachers to assess student work and provide feedback.

Alliances also enriches our courses with the integration of online learning programs and applications, such as Adobe Express and the Art of Education University for visual arts, MIT App Inventor for mobile apps-telepresence, DESMOS for math, NewsELA, and Jamboard/FigJam, among others. Moreover, the use of Edgenuity has proven beneficial in helping overaged and uncredited students recover credits, improve their Lexile levels, engage in article annotation and discussions on current events, and gain exposure to online learning.

This academic year, Alliance has adopted Engage K12, wherein teachers conduct remote teaching while a classroom coach supports and motivates students, aimed at enhancing the rigor and learning outcomes in science education. Over the years, Alliance has collaborated with other schools to broaden course offerings through telepresence, thereby diversifying the curriculum and increasing student communication and technology skills, leading to enhanced learning outcomes and reduced class sizes.

Whether students are participating in interactive sessions with professionals from diverse fields, engaging in educational games such as Kahoot, or conducting independent research to define

"memoir," blended learning fosters a flexible and challenging classroom environment adaptable to the varied learning needs of students.

Additional Practices

In addition to core constructs, Alliance attributes growth, achievement, and behavior improvements to the following practices:

- Full inclusion of students
- A co-teaching model in core classrooms
- Freshman Cohort Classes
- Small class sizes
- College Programs: M³, Early Start Now
- Internships and Apprenticeships
- Parent engagement, support and commitment
- Authentic collaboration and ownership amongst staff
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Telepresence
- Elevate K12
- Xello
- Half day for Staff development and data driven decision making

Growth Measures

During the term of the Alliance contract, Alliance has worked on a considerable number of objectives, goals, and areas of academic performance, and will continue to work on these objectives and goals.

Attendance Rate for Students at the Alliance School of Milwaukee and Milwaukee Public Schools

School Year	Attendance Percentage	
	School	District ¹
2023-2024	60.8% (17.1% Reg. Attending ²)	83.3% (50.2% Reg. Attending ²)
2022-2023	60.2%	82.3%
2021-2022	60.8%	79.7%

¹District attendance average includes all students K3-12th grade.

²Students who attended 90% or more of the school year

Four Year High School Graduation Rate

School Year (Grad Cohort)	Students in Cohort	Graduates	Group Percent	District Percentage
2021-22 (2022)	42	23	54.8%	65.2%
2022-23 (2023)	47	17	36.2%	65.6%
2023-24 (2024)	40	17	42.5%	
2024-25 (2025)	45	1 ³	2.2% ⁴	

³Student from 2025 Graduation Cohort graduated with 2024 Graduation Cohort

Five Year High School Graduation Rate

School Year (Grad Cohort)	Students in Cohort	Graduates	Group Percent
2021-22 (2021)	45	28	62.2%
2022-23 (2022)	40	25	62.5%
2023-24 (2023)	44	20	45.5%

Six Year High School Graduation Rate

School Year (Grad Cohort)	Students in Cohort	Graduates	Group Percent
2021-22 (2020)	65	45	69.2%
2022-23 (2021)	46	28	60.9%
2023-24 (2022)	41	26	63.4%

Seven Year High School Graduation Rate

School Year (Grad Cohort)	Students in Cohort	Graduates	Group Percent
2021-22 (2019)	54	38	70.4%
2022-23 (2020)	65	45	69.2%
2023-24 (2021)	46	28	60.9%

Suspension Rate

School Year	Students Enrolled	# of Students Suspended	Percent of Students Suspended	Total Number of Suspensions
2021-22	221	37	16.7%	71
2022-23	197	56	28.4%	85
2023-24	201	52	25.9%	73

Assessment: ACT

School Year	Number of Students	Average Composite Score	Average Math Score	Average Reading Score
2021-22	18	14.89	14.44	15.28
2022-23	19	15.28	14.50	15.7
2023-24	22	15.38	14.40	15.52

Financial Performance

The Alliance School has demonstrated remarkable financial performance, maintaining a stable budget for the past thirteen years and adhering to all fiscal and financial management requirements. Over the last three years, Ms. Smith has exhibited exemplary fiscal responsibility, effectively managed a limited budget and generated a surplus to uphold the quality of education, as indicated in the 2023-2024 Alliance Charter School Performance and Compliance Audit Reports. The school employs specific practices to ensure its ongoing financial stability, including:

- The school leader works with the assigned bookkeeper and district staff in the Office of Finance to ensure that all accountability measures and district practices for spending and receiving money are followed.
- The school leader checks the budget accounts in IFAS frequently throughout the year to ensure that no errors or unauthorized charges are made in the school budget accounts.
- The school is well-supported in the Milwaukee community and receives donations that help the school to offer additional services and experiences for the youth. All donations are reported to the Board using the required “Donation from an Outside Source” form.
- The School Engagement Council meets monthly to review the budget; financial information is shared, and feedback is encouraged.

Organizational Performance

The Alliance School of Milwaukee chooses to petition the School Board for a contract with the Milwaukee Public Schools to facilitate collaboration with the district offices and provide optimal opportunities and resources for students. We benefit from working alongside a team at the Central Office to receive training, support, and resources, ensuring adherence to all Board policies. This high level of district support is fundamental to the school's organizational framework, contributing significantly to its effectiveness.

Employing a democratic leadership model, The Alliance School distributes administrative responsibilities and decision-making among its staff, fostering a stronger sense of ownership, responsibility, and commitment. This approach also ensures that all staff members maintain robust connections with students, families, and the community.

On Wednesday afternoons, Alliance staff convene for professional learning sessions to address school objectives, current issues, and to create proactive teaching resources while fostering a sense of community.

The school's partnerships with community agencies and organizations enable the provision of a comprehensive range of services to students. Over the past three years, The Alliance School has collaborated with numerous organizations to achieve this goal, including:

- The Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin to address health and wellness issues for youth
- Pathfinders of Milwaukee, to address the issue of homelessness and counseling services for families
- The Milwaukee LGBTQIA+ Community Center, to provide opportunities for LGBTQIA+ youth to engage in activities outside of school
- Riverside University High School for athletics
- UWM, for observation opportunities for social workers in training
- The International Peace Studies Program, to share information about restorative practices in schools
- The ACLU of Wisconsin, to provide opportunities for youth to become civically engaged
- Diverse and Resilient, to provide information and resources on Healthy Relationships, HIV, STI, and alcohol abuse
- National Alliance for LGBTQ+ Schools

- College Access Centers

The partnerships we establish with various stakeholders form a robust support system for students and their families, many of whom face challenges that extend beyond the school environment. Our engagement with parents and family members plays a pivotal role in driving organizational performance at The Alliance School. We highly value and actively encourage parental involvement through various avenues such as our monthly Student Engagement Council Meetings, Family Unity Nights, and regular dissemination of information via newsletters, phone calls, letters, emails, and the school webpage. Parents are urged to utilize the Parent Portal, communicate with teachers or staff members regarding concerns, schedule meetings for telephonic, virtual, or in-person discussions, and participate in Parent/Teacher Conferences and other family-centric events.

The fact that we consistently welcome students from Milwaukee and its neighboring areas, including those returning to MPS after attending schools outside our district, attests to the effectiveness of our program.

Alliance has a dedicated and highly educated staff that is committed to the school's vision, values, and mission. The staff consists of 11.5 teachers, one general education paraprofessional, one school secretary, one full-time school social worker, an Assistant Principal in Charge, one part-time School Psychologist, and one full-time Guidance Counselor. This team works tirelessly to advance students' education. Additionally, Alliance has a low staff turnover, which contributes to the school's stability and progress. Those who have left the staff are either retired or have accepted positions in other areas of MPS and teaching.

II. Plans for Continued Success:

Educational Performance

The Alliance School is committed to upholding its mission of catering to a diverse student body, many of whom come from historically underserved backgrounds. A significant portion of our students face challenging circumstances, including being over-age and under-credited or having disabilities, which accounts for 41.3% of our historic student population. In response, the Alliance School will provide specialized training to support students with disabilities and equip staff to effectively address warning signs and challenges that may hinder academic progress and graduation.

To further our commitment to academic progress and student well-being, Alliance staff will undergo district best-practices professional development to implement data-driven strategies and amplify student voice. These efforts will encompass credit recovery, project-based instruction, and other tailored approaches to support our diverse student body.

In line with our School Improvement Plan (SIP), the school will introduce a comprehensive literacy initiative to be integrated across all disciplines. This literacy plan will be foundational to our educational mission and will encompass a broad spectrum of activities, including fostering writing across the curriculum, organizing school wide Write Days, enhancing comprehension of informational texts, and reinforcing grammar and conventions across the school.

Addressing critical issues such as attendance, GPA, behavior, and graduation, we have adopted mentoring, revised our implementation of Restorative Practices, and directed professional development toward achieving these objectives. Recognizing the pivotal role of attendance in obtaining a high GPA and graduation, we will actively promote accountability and regular progress discussions through mentorship, programs, and dedicated staff.

Looking ahead, the Alliance School will persist in implementing a district-wide curriculum with a focus on literacy and restorative practices. These programs will evolve and adapt to meet the evolving needs of the school while staying rooted in their core objectives. Establishing strong connections with all students, with an emphasis on improving attendance, will continue to be a top priority to enhance graduation rates and foster knowledge acquisition. Additionally, the school remains dedicated to providing Career Technical Education in Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship, Mobile Applications, and computer courses. We will also uphold our support for students with afterschool tutoring and mentoring, while continually offering high-level educational programs, including Advanced Placement and a diverse arts program.

Goals and Measurable Objectives:

- Increase the number of students scoring “on target” or “significantly above target” on their STAR reading test by 5% over the course of a five-year contract term
- Increase the number of students scoring “on target” or “significantly above target” on their STAR math test by 5% over the course of a five-year contract term.
- Increase the overall attendance rate of students by 10% over the course of five-year contract

term.

- Decrease suspension rate from 25.9% to 20.0% over the course of a five-year contract term
- Accomplish the following major PreACT goals over the course of a five-year contract term
 - Increase the number of sophomore students who rate in the range of READY or EXCEEDING on the English subject test by 5%
 - Increase the number of sophomore students who rate in the range of READY or EXCEEDING on the Reading subject test by 5%
 - Increase the number of sophomore students who rate in the range of READY or EXCEEDING on the Writing subject test by 5%
 - Increase the number of sophomore students who rate in the range of READY or EXCEEDING on the Math subject test by 5%
 - Increase the number of sophomore students who rate in the range of READY or EXCEEDING on the Science subject test by 5%
- Continue to close the achievement gaps in reading and in math on the state assessments

The prolonged closure of schools of over a year due to a global pandemic had a profound impact on our Alliance community, significantly influencing both academic and social development.

Numerous students, particularly those already contending with skill-related challenges requiring intense, in-person instruction for academic progress, suffered academic setbacks that continue to need addressing. Concurrently, virtual and asynchronous learning exacerbated social deficits among students, leading to heightened instances of anxiety and an increased demand for mental health services. Many students exhibit gaps in the above skills usually acquired during earlier academic years of school. Moreover, the habits formed during virtual learning of not attending physical school, coupled with the prevalence of mental and physical health concerns, has contributed to a rise in attendance issues.

The staff at Alliance diligently strives to address educational disparities and offer social-emotional assistance to all our students. As a result, numerous Alliance students have demonstrated progress in both their academic performance and social skills in comparison to their initial baseline levels. Nonetheless, when evaluating students collectively in contrast to previous cohorts, these advancements may not be evident, as each student is unique and must be assessed based on their individual progress.

The staff maintains regular check-ins with students, provides mentorship to those facing

educational obstacles, and formulates customized educational plans tailored to individual student requirements when students have fallen significantly behind. We work to motivate all students and adjust instructional delivery to align with each student's learning capacity. Furthermore, teachers at Alliance have harnessed a diverse array of technical strategies such as Jamboard, Flipgrid, and Kahoot to effectively engage students.

Financial Performance

The school has demonstrated a commitment to sustained financial responsibility and success. The Assistant Principal In Charge (APIC) continues to collaborate with the bookkeeper to enhance accounting practices, aiming for increased accuracy and efficiency.

The Alliance School is grateful for the ongoing support from various organizations, agencies, and individuals within the community. We intend to uphold this momentum by organizing an annual fundraising gala and other initiatives to recognize and appreciate the contributions of our staff and community members.

Organizational Performance

In the autumn of 2019, The Alliance School experienced a transition in its leadership. Allan Laird departed from his position, and Phyllis Smith assumed the role of Administrator of Alliance. This abrupt and significant change posed a considerable challenge for Alliance, particularly given the shift from a teacher-led to an administrator-led leadership model just a few years earlier. Nevertheless, this change was necessary for the advancement of Alliance and our educational methodologies.

The Alliance School will continue to maintain and strengthen the following systems and programs to engage parents and community alike:

- We will continue to support a strong Special Education Department, staffed with highly qualified special education teachers and supported by paraprofessionals. This will facilitate enhanced teacher-parent communication for a wider range of our students, irrespective of their specific educational requirements. As well as expand and change special education programs, such as creating a Bridging Unit for students who traditionally were unable to participate in Regular Education due to disabilities that impact academic skill acquisition, to fit the needs of our changing population. We will also continue to encourage students with disabilities to gain employment skills through the district's Community Assessment

Training Program (CATP) and On the Job Training program (OJT).

- We will continue to provide high quality instruction.
- We will provide Credit Recovery through approved district programs and funding. Presently, we utilize the Edgenuity program, which enables the direct dissemination of weekly updates and progress reports to parents of students enrolled in those classes.
- Students will establish and perpetuate programs, clubs, events, and initiatives that serve to strengthen school culture and engage the broader community.
- Our Parent Coordinator will actively involve families in the school community through various events, such as the Student Engagement Council, Title 1 Parent Meetings, Family Unity Nights, and other parent-student-school activities. The Parent Coordinator will continually recruit parents and community members to participate in our governance council meetings, send out a monthly newsletter, and ensure prompt updates to our website.
- We will expand our restorative practices program and seamlessly integrate these practices into all programs and the school culture.
- Our staff will continue to warmly welcome district and community visitors to engage in initiatives and student-led programs, including Write Days, Restorative Practice Circles, and Service-Learning Projects.
- Through our Freshmen Bridge Program and New Student Orientation, we will foster strong parent involvement through parent registration, parent circles, and a family potluck.
- We will continue to support and build programs that will help students to empathize, develop their identity, and express themselves, as well as increase understanding and acceptance, such as Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA).
- We will plan Student Incentive/Acknowledgment Programs to encourage and celebrate our students.
- We implemented increased College and Career opportunities through the adoption of Personal Finance, Mobile Applications, Introduction to Entrepreneurship, M³, College courses, as well as college visits and career visit programs.

In the upcoming years, we plan to implement the following:

- Increase exploration of community opportunities through local college and career exploration visits.
- Increase the number of students who apply for FASFA thereby increasing parent involvement in post-secondary planning
- Continue to embed academic interventions within the classroom with a literacy focus

- Continue to expand the practices of our Professional Learning Communities through regular collaboration, thereby increasing parent communication and involvement in testing, events, restorative practices, and literacy initiatives.
- Maintain an inclusive community

The Alliance school upholds its democratic governance structure. We place great emphasis on restorative practices, incorporate data and input from students and staff into decision-making processes, and receive unwavering support from the district. This sustains an organizational framework driven by the collective contributions of staff, students, and the community. The midweek early-release day for students enables our staff to foster the principles outlined in this charter, ultimately enriching the educational experience for our students.

Conclusion

The Alliance School community takes great pride in its status as an Instrumentality Charter of the Milwaukee Public School district and hopes to continue this relationship with a five-year contract term. The community is steadfast in its commitment to continuously investing in practices that have a positive impact on student achievement and in fostering ongoing collaboration with district, university, and state education leaders. The staff, students, and families highly value the opportunity to operate within a district dedicated to meeting the needs of all students, without exception. We hope that the Milwaukee Public Schools will support the continued relationship by renewing its charter contract with The Alliance School of Milwaukee.