



June 21, 2024

Milwaukee Public Schools
5225 W. Vliet Street
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Dear Milwaukee Public Schools Board Members,

At Next Door, we proudly serve over 900 of Milwaukee's children, age birth-to-five, supporting their intellectual, physical, and emotional development, by partnering with families for success in school and the community.

Next Door and MPS have been partners in education since the 2006-2007 school year. Our K5 partnership concluded in 2022-2023, however, and the K4 partnership is set to expire shortly. This decision was made under previous leadership, no longer serving at Next Door.

When I began as president of Next Door in January of 2023, I was informed of the timeline ending our contract and partnership with MPS. Primary factors of this decision, as explained, were rooted in concerns over declining enrollment numbers of K4 and K5 aged children, as more families were enrolling in the primary schools their children would attend. Additionally, there remain staffing challenges in recruiting sufficient numbers of DPI credentialed teachers. Though recruiting and retaining high-quality educators remains a local and national challenge, we believe there is more work to be done. Next Door is determined to meet this need, ensuring all children have access to exceptional educators and the highest quality in educational programming. We are confident we can continue to build and maintain healthy enrollment.

Given new leadership and vision at Next Door, coupled with our valued partnership with MPS in effectively serving children and families in Milwaukee, Next Door is requesting a one-year renewal extension of our current contract, asking the Board to waive *Policy 9.12* and continue our Charter agreement for our K4 students in the 2024-2025 school year. If approved, we will take all necessary steps to efficiently and thoughtfully continue our continuity of services to families, together with your support, as partners and ambassadors of Milwaukee Public Schools. Thank you for your consideration and for trusting in our partnership.

Respectfully,

Heather Mehring Grams, President

Bradley Jansen, Board Chair