



MPS Charter School Contract Review Team Comments and Renewal Recommendation

Name of Charter School: Hmong American Peace Academy (HAPA)
Date: November 27, 2017

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 Performance Standards
- Application for Renewal
- School Site Visit

Charter School Performance Summary

Educational Performance Rating:

Met the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
X	

Financial Performance Rating:

Met the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
X	

Organizational Performance Rating:

Met the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
X	

Summary Comments on Performance Ratings:

(Instructions: Provide summary comments and rationale for the performance ratings. Provide examples to support the ratings.)

Educational Performance:

HAPA has continued to meet the performance measures outlined over the term of the contract. In 2013-14 they met 94% of the measures, in 2014-15 they met 92% of the measures and in 2015-16 and 2016-17 they met 100% of the measures. HAPA has a long track record of producing high academic outcomes and provides a safe learning environment for nearly 1,600 students in MPS. The school has exceeded the district in the percentage of students who are proficient on all Wisconsin State Assessments (WSAS) for the duration of the contract term.

HAPA continues to close the gap in reading and mathematics based on the universal screener.

Financial Performance:

HAPA has had unmodified audits over the contract term. The school has no budget deficits and is financially secure.

Organizational Performance:

HAPA continues to be organizationally sound. They have a diverse governing body that supports the school. HAPA believes that parents are valuable partners in the mission of the school. HAPA has initiated and organized a variety of parent events that are well attended, with over 1,000 parents attending. Some of these events include workshops, parent meetings and conferences, student of the month activities, educational field experiences, and school events. The school has a full-time, bi-lingual parent coordinator whose primary role is to work with parents.

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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; and - Illustrated sufficiently and convincingly that it is organizationally sound. - 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.</p> <p>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; and - Inadequate evidence that it is organizationally sound. - The school's plans for continued success are unclear and not fully described or developed.

Met the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
X	

Summary Comments on the Application for Renewal:

(Instructions: Provide examples of strengths and weaknesses in the application for renewal.)

HAPA has demonstrated in its application for renewal that it is educationally, financially, and organizationally sound based on the clear, concise, and compelling information that was provided in the respective areas.

HAPA's mission is to provide students with rigorous academics, character development and Hmong cultural values, preparing them to excel in college, universities and careers. HAPA envisions that students will enjoy college and career success, value Hmong culture and heritage, and exhibit responsible and peaceful leadership in local and global communities. Over 90% of the student body comes from homes where language, other than English, is spoken. HAPA continues to be one of Milwaukee's highest performing charter schools, with nearly 100% attendance rate, test scores exceeding the district average, and nearly every student who graduates is accepted to a college or university.

HAPA was founded on three main components that center on standards-based academics, cultural strengths and peace education. HAPA is able to serve the growing Hmong population of Milwaukee by offering a unique and innovative Hmong program rich in language, culture and history to its students. A strength of HAPA is that it offers students the opportunity to become bi-lingual and bi-cultural individuals. A key component to HAPA's culture and climate is the Peace Builders program. This program instills lifelong skills for students to build peace at school, home and in the community.

HAPA provided credible examples and documented evidence of its financial performance over time. The school is organizationally and financially sound.

HAPA sufficiently illustrated that it is organizationally sound. HAPA honors traditions and explores new ideas based on data driven decisions in the best interest of students. HAPA has four instructional leaders that are

supported by instructional coaches and arranged by grade bands (grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12). Through this model, teachers are supported and provided feedback on an on-going basis to support the instruction and developmental level of students.

HAPA has increased its enrollment as evidenced by approximately 200 students when the school was established to approximately 1,600 students, currently who attend HAPA. Due to the increase in enrollment, HAPA has grades K-2 housed at HAPA Happy Hill and the remaining students attend the main campus.

HAPA has a strong governing body made of a diverse group of individuals ranging in ethnicity and expertise. The governing body is invested in the students that attend HAPA and support the executive director in the decision making process.

The school has included ample evidence of increased student achievement and has clearly and effectively outlined the school's plan for continued success. HAPA expects to reach an enrollment of approximately 2,010 students by the year 2022-23 to serve grades K4-12. The school will continue to implement the educational program as outlined. Based on the application, HAPA plans to continue its success through increasing enrollment, growth in partnership and on-going implementation of meeting its academic goals.

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"> - 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. - 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"> - 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. - Samples of student work and classroom visits did not necessarily positively reflect the school's teaching and learning practices.

Met the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
X	

Summary Comments on School Site Visit:

(Instructions: Provide comments regarding the school site visit.)

The site visit to HAPA provided excellent further evidence that the school is meeting its performance standards. The school clearly and effectively communicated information from its application, sufficiently addressed any concerns raised by the Review Team, provided sufficient supplementary information to further clarify performance results, and the samples of student work and classroom visits reflect strongly and positively the school's teaching and learning practices.

HAPA provided insight into the history of the school, from its inception to the present configuration and plans for the future. It was evident that the school prides itself on the rich Hmong culture, which was displayed through artifacts, language and Peace Builders upon entrance to the school.

HAPA provides a cycle of professional development to their staff members that focuses on continuous improvement. New staff are on-boarded to understand the Hmong culture and provided Peace Builder training, which supports the key components in the mission of the school. For current staff, they continue to extend their understanding of Hmong culture and instructional practices for English Language Learners (ELL). Staff learn strategies in utilizing data to make instructional decisions.

HAPA's goal is to increase student leadership and empower them to become servant leaders and peace builders in their communities. As HAPA has grown, it has begun to offer more after school activities that supports rigorous academics and character development. Some of these activities include; tutoring, college possible, extended care, enrichment clubs, and interscholastic programs. In addition, HAPA offers National Honor Society and is in its first year of offering advanced placement courses which includes calculus, literature, environmental sciences and US government and politics. HAPA offers various internships and currently has 15 juniors and 15 seniors participating in the program. The school has a variety of Project Lead the Way courses focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

The Team observed a variety of classrooms and noticed that there was evidence of implementation of the

educational program as demonstrated by the anchor charts, high level questioning, character building, and student engagement. College and career readiness standards, college writing and STEM focused college prep academic courses have been included in course offerings which connect to the academic rigor and expectations of HAPA. The classroom visits displayed best practices including student group work, student discourse, differentiation and engagement. There was consistent expectations in each of the classrooms and buildings from kindergarten through grade twelve.

Through the parent focus group, parents appreciated the blend of the American and Hmong cultures. Parents appreciate the opportunities to have their children learn about their rich heritage as they receive a quality education. The parents noted that HAPA is a safe place that feels more like a family. Teachers have been a strong influence on the students and motivate their children to be successful. The parents would like to see more after school activities offered for students. Parents noted that they appreciate the bi-lingual staff who are readily available to communicate about their child's education. HAPA helps students become intrinsically motivated to be better and assist students with filling out college applications and scholarships. As one parent stated, "I chose HAPA for my children to learn about the culture because I feel it's dying off and we are becoming 'Americanized'". HAPA not only teaches the children to be proud of their heritage, but has high academic expectations to be successful after high school as well.

During the student focus group, the Team was able to hear from a variety of students' experiences at HAPA. The students ranged in grades from third through twelfth and the focus group had one to twelve years of attending HAPA. The high school students appreciated the growing opportunities to participate in advanced placement courses that will prepare them for college. They noted that the school feels like a community and value their culture and heritage. HAPA has a variety of cultural activities where students can always find some way of participating and being involved. The internship experiences have been helpful and as one student stated, it helped her decide what she wanted to be. The students noted that the graduates visit the school to provide insight into life after high school and in college. Students would like to see more languages offered, other than Hmong, and more involvement in interscholastic sports and clubs. Students noted that if they could improve anything, it would be the amount of homework they receive because it consumes them after school. Because the school is 99% Hmong, the students noted that they would like to see more diversity and learn from experiences of others that come from different backgrounds than them. However, they noted that they understand how their culture will give them a voice in their community as the Hmong are slowly growing in America.

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Renewal Recommendation by MPS Charter School Contract Review Team

The renewal recommendation for Hmong American Peace Academy (HAPA) School is:

Full-term Renewal – Term of Five Years

Short-term Renewal – Term of Three Years

Non-Renewal / Revocation

Renewal Recommendation Rationale:

Summary Comments:

(Instructions: Provide summary comments and rationale for the renewal recommendation. Provide examples to support the recommendation.)

HAPA is a high quality charter school, on the northwest side of Milwaukee, who is successfully serving a growing population of Hmong students. They value and pride themselves in their culture as well as their high academic standards. It is HAPA's hope that it can eventually serve all their children at one location as they continue to grow. HAPA became the hopes and dreams as a refugee for Hmong in Milwaukee.

HAPA is both a high-performing and award winning school. It has been recognized by *US News and World Report* in 2015 and 2017 ranking of "Best High Schools" with a bronze medal and continues to be recognized, nationally, as a high-performing school based on the state exam performance. HAPA recognizes that there still is work to be done to continue to grow every student to proficiency on the state assessments. It has nearly 100% of students who have graduated accepted to a college and have increased the amount of scholarships awarded each year.

HAPA is a school that builds pride, self-esteem, ownership, and dignity which challenges students to reach their highest potential. The school is aesthetically pleasing with displays and artifacts of both the Hmong and American culture throughout the building. Students are respectful and are challenged in the coursework through high expectations of leadership and staff. All stakeholders take pride in the organization and are clearly invested in the school and its students.

The students and parents provided some of the best insight into what makes this program successful and why families continue to choose HAPA. They cited safety, a focus on maintaining cultural practices and high academic standards as the main reasons for HAPA's success. The students were very passionate and honest explaining that having opportunities to travel to see universities and colleges and job-shadowing within their community was a huge factor in preparing them early for college and beyond. Their testimony sent a clear message that the preparation modeled at HAPA have helped develop their abilities to self-assess and become life-long, self-directed learners.

The MPS Charter School Review Team recommended five years based on the solid academic performance toward obtaining the educational goals. The school has demonstrated a sound financial and organizational performance and have a long-term plan to maintain the viability of the program. Since HAPA was established, it continues to meet the provisions of the contract. HAPA has demonstrated compelling evidence that they are a high quality charter school and a valued partner with MPS.

MPS Charter School Review Team Members: (List names and affiliation of all members)

Nuntiata Buck	MPS Curriculum and Instruction
Joan Butz	Community Volunteer
Gene Campbell	MPS Specialized Service
Terry Falk	MPS Board of Directors
LaTasha Fields	MPS Rtl/PBIS Coach
Dorneesha Hill	Community Volunteer
Felecia Jasper-Mitchell	MPS Finance
Robert Latterman	MPS Assessment
Mark Sain	MPS Board of Directors
Bridget Schock	MPS Contracted School Services
Ceasar Stinson	MPS Office of Board Governance
Michelle Wade	MPS Curriculum and Instruction

Signature:  _____ Date: November 27, 2017
Marla Bronaugh, Director, Office of Contracted School Services