



August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

Bridget Schock, Director  
Department of Contracted School Services  
5225 W. Vliet Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Transited via Email

Dear Ms. Schock,

This letter serves as Hmong American Peace Academy's charter renewal letter of intent. Hmong American Peace Academy (HAPA) is seeking a five-year contract renewal, effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2028.

Please note that Ms. Chris Her-Xiong is the renewal contact person. Her email address is [herxiong.chris@myhapa.org](mailto:herxiong.chris@myhapa.org) and her cell phone is 414.380.4521. Should you have any questions, please feel free to call or email her.

Thank you.

Forever Forward,

Chris Her-Xiong  
Chief Executive Officer

Sincerely,

Jason Handal  
Board Chair

# Hmong American Peace Academy Charter Contract Renewal Application

September 22, 2022

## I. Response to Current Charter School Performance

### Academic Performance

1. Provide a description of how the school has been faithful in implementing its educational program outlined in the charter proposal (Appendix A).

During the contracted school years, HAPA has faithfully implemented its educational program as outlined in the charter proposal (Appendix A). As a high-performing and award-winning school, HAPA has earned the distinguished honor of being nationally recognized by *U.S. News and World Report* in the past years in Rankings of Best High Schools with a Bronze Medal. Schools that receive the “Nationally Recognized” designation must qualify as high-performing schools based on state exam performance. Another example of how HAPA has been faithful in implementing its educational program is the overall accountability ratings of earning and “Exceeds Expectations” rating of 81.4% in 2018-19 and 71.2% in 2020-21 on the school’s Report Cards issued by DPI.

As HAPA continues to grow and expand as a high-performing and award winning school, the Academy is committed to advancing HAPA’s mission, vision and goals of rigorous education, cultural strengths, and peace for all. HAPA is one of Milwaukee’s most successful charter schools, with nearly a 100% attendance rate, State test scores which exceed the district averages, and nearly a 100% college acceptance rate. Graduates are career and college-ready, with many attending Wisconsin’s most prestigious colleges and universities. HAPA continues to prepare students for success in college and careers despite the fact that nearly 90% of the student population lives below the federal poverty level.

For the past eighteen years HAPA has successfully designed and implemented a curriculum founded on three main components: Standards-Based Academics, Cultural Strengths, and Peace Education. To this end, each of these areas plays an important role in a comprehensive educational plan designed to be integral in the academic, psychosocial, and civic development of its scholars.

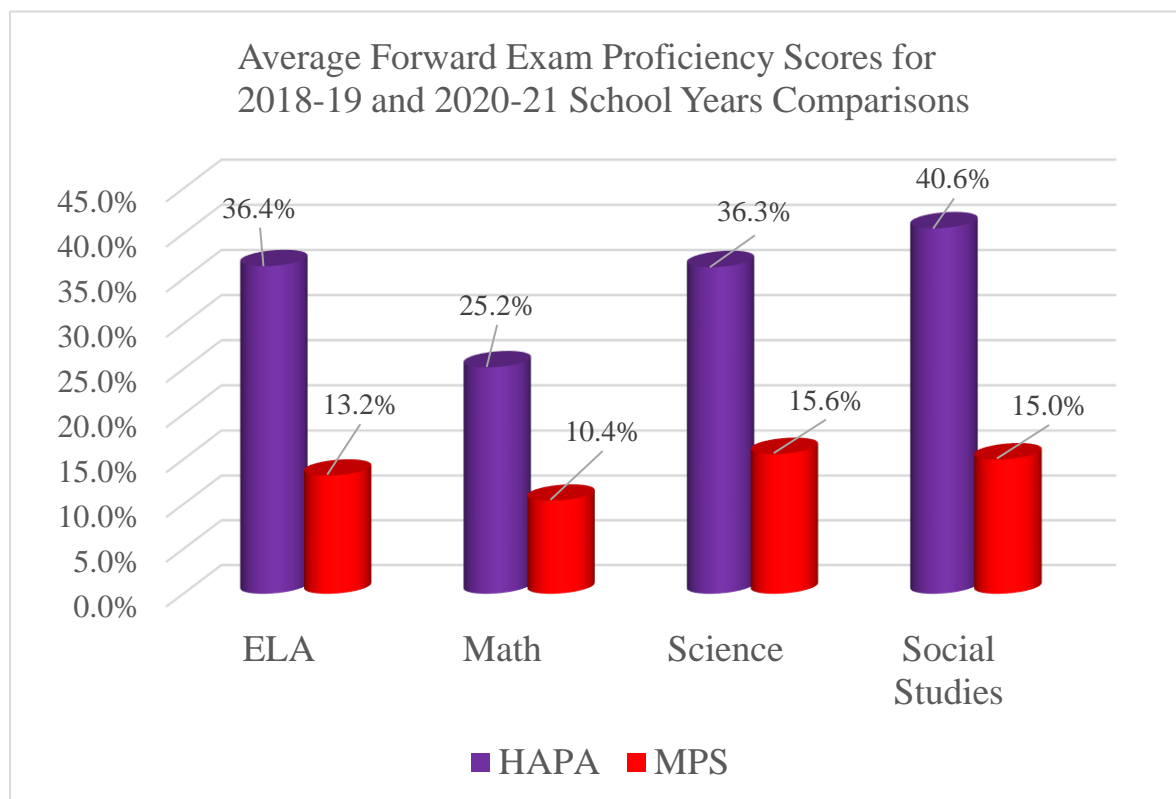
HAPA is a school that builds pride, self-esteem, ownership, and dignity which challenges students to reach their highest potential. With HAPA’s vision and educational goals, students are encouraged to seek the American educational opportunities that will provide a way for students to become successful and productive citizens. Hence, HAPA offers a unique and innovative Hmong language, culture, and history program. This component offers children the opportunity to fully value their personal backgrounds while also becoming active participants in their larger, mainstream communities.

Another component of HAPA’s curriculum is Peace Education. HAPA fosters attitudes that serve and transform learners into citizens of the world, promote students to think and act critically, strive for a global mindset, and solve problems peacefully. Key elements of the PeaceBuilders program are to praise people, to give up put-downs, to seek wise people, to notice and speak up about hurts one has caused, to right wrongs, and to help others.

Scholars pledge to build peace at home, at school, and in the community each day. HAPA parents, staff, and students commit to a community whose members strive to practice a peaceful lifestyle at home, at school, and beyond.

Capturing Kids' Hearts is a preventative program where the adults capture the hearts of students by building positive and meaningful relationships. When we have their hearts, trusting, respectful, and caring relationships flourish. Capturing Kids' Hearts is the core of a powerful process that allows every member of the school to foster and become part of a high-performing, learning community.

HAPA's rigorous academic program has prepared the scholars to consistently score above the district assessments in the last academic years. Below is a graph reflecting the average Wisconsin Forward Exam proficiency scores comparing HAPA with the district.

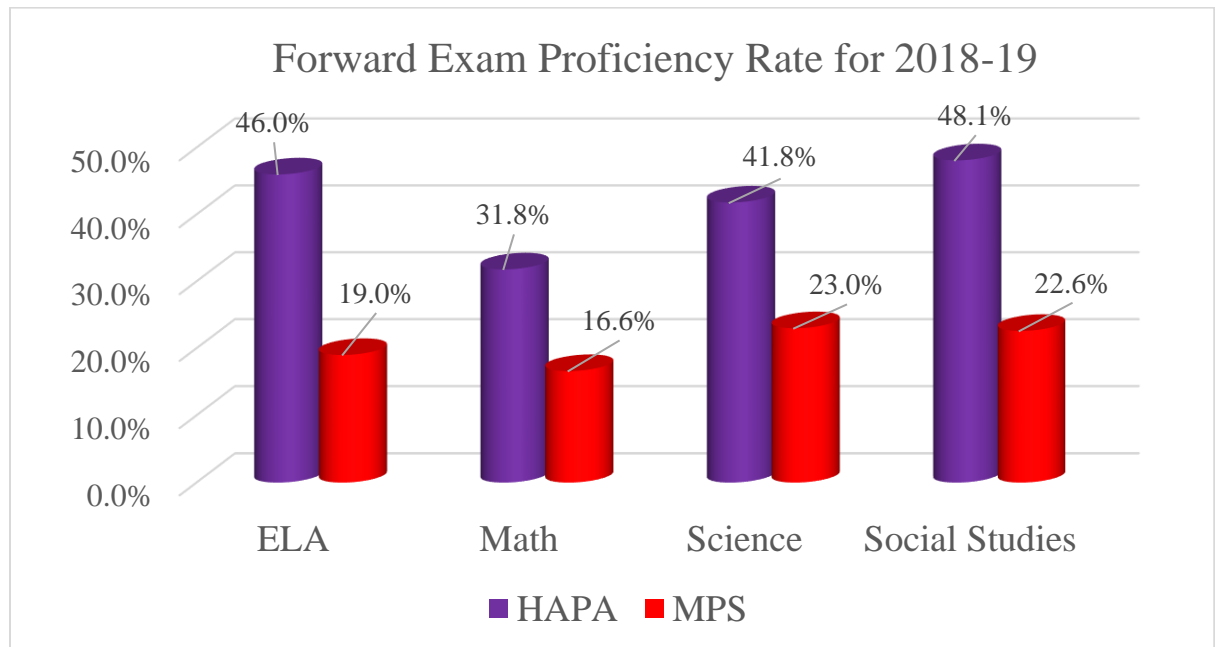


2. Explain how the school has met goals and measurable objectives during the term of this contract. Highlight growth in student achievement and provide evidence of how the school is making progress towards meeting its academic outcome.

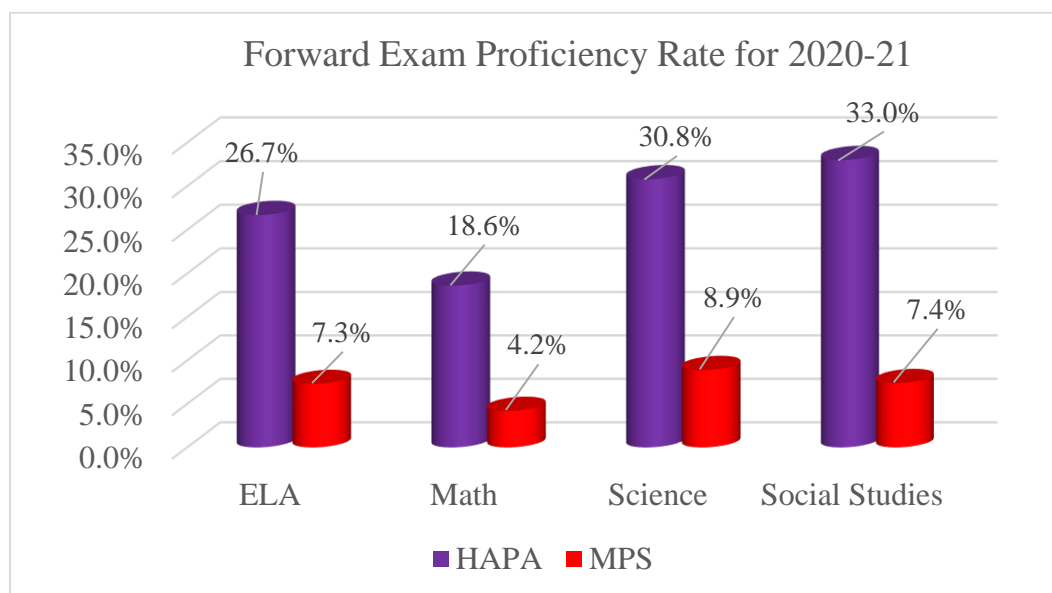
HAPA has exceeded the district in all areas of Reading, Language Arts, Science, Math, and Social Studies on the Wisconsin Forward Exams from 2018-2019 and 2020-2021.

**Highlight of Student Achievement:**

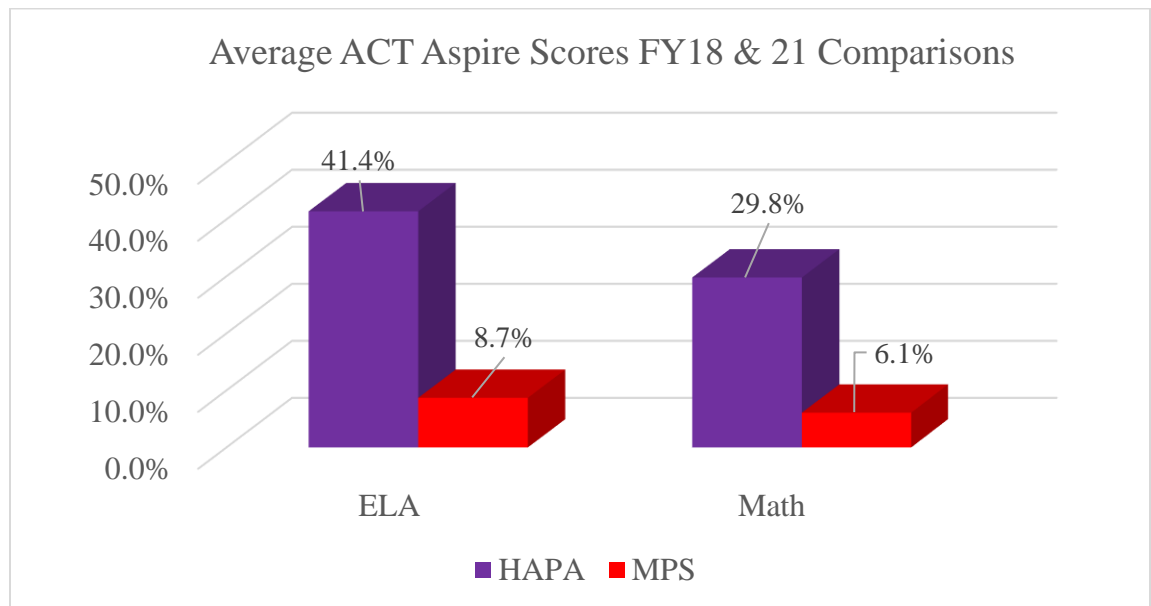
During the 2018-2019 school year, HAPA students exceeded district performance on the Wisconsin Forward assessment by 27% in English/Language Arts, by 15.2% in Mathematics, by 18.8% in Science and by 25.5% in Social Studies as reflected below.



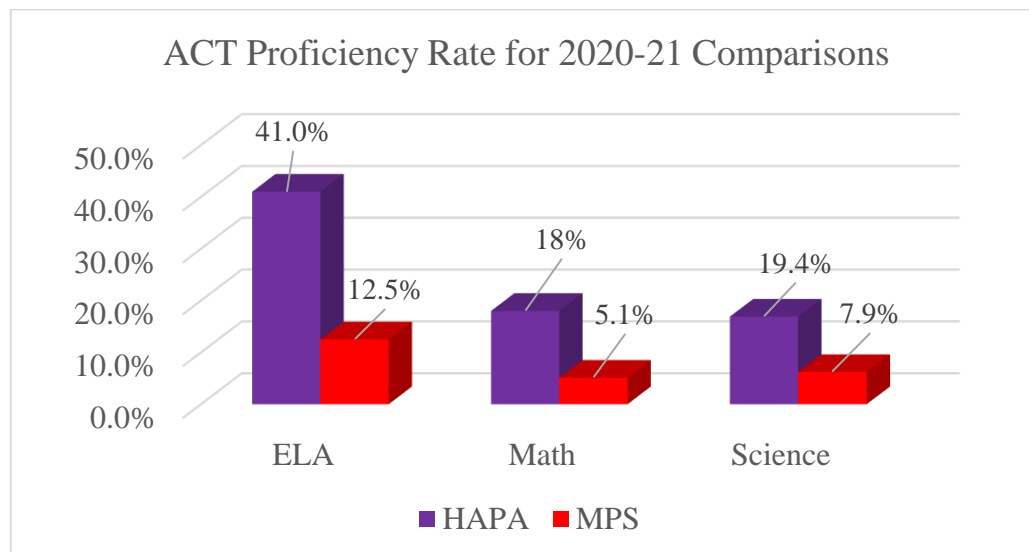
During 2020-2021 school year, HAPA students exceeded district performance on the Wisconsin Forward Exams by 19.4% in English/Language Arts, by 14.4% in Mathematics, by 21.9% in Science, and by 25.6% in Social Studies as reflected below.



During the 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 school years, students in grades 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> exceeded district performance on the Wisconsin ACT Aspire exam in English Language Arts by 33.6% and Mathematics by 30.9%. Students exceeded district performance on the ACT Aspire assessment in Science by 11.5% as reflected below.



During the 2020-2021 school year, students in 11<sup>th</sup> grade exceeded district performance on the ACT exam in English Language Arts by 28.5%, in Mathematics by 12.9%, and in Science by 11.5% as reflected below.



3. Provide a description of how the school continued to provide educational and social-emotional support to students and families during an extended school closure. Provide evidence of its success and challenges during this time and any additional steps you might take if a similar closure would occur in the future.

Meeting the social-emotional and mental health needs of HAPA's scholars is an important aspect of any schooling regardless of format. HAPA implements training around trauma-informed practices, mindfulness, PeaceBuilders, Capturing Kids' Hearts, and best practices in addressing these needs.

Although there are many components which HAPA was able to complete and secure for our families during the school closure, below are the highlighted components:

- Secured over 1,200 Chromebooks for scholars
- Secured over 800 Hotspots to families without internet access
- Partnered with the Hunger Task Force to provide food distribution twice a week
- Had over 95 percent student participation rate with virtual learning
- Implemented a weekly HAPA Families Communications
- Provided training for families on how to engage through virtual format
- Provided staff training on various online platforms such as Google Suite (Google Meet, Google Classroom, etc.)
- Implemented HAPA's Virtual Learning Plan
- Implemented HAPA's Reopening Strategic Plan
- Secured additional resources or personnel to address the SEL component
- Implemented HAPA's COVID-19 health and safety measures
- Board adopted a COVID-19 vaccination policy
- Hosted monthly COVID-19 vaccination clinic
- Hosted weekly COVID-19 testing sites

In the event that a similar closure would occur in the future, HAPA is confident of its established processes, procedures, practices, policies, and technology infrastructure; thus, HAPA is positioned and ready to continue to provide excellent services to its scholars and their families.

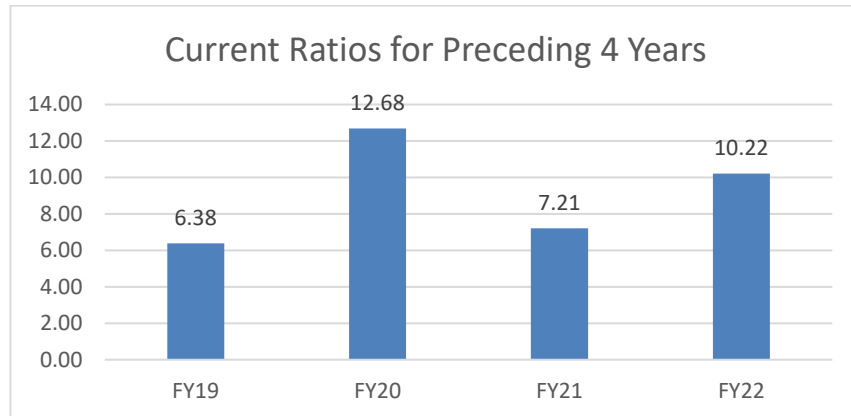
### **Financial Performance**

4. Explain how the school has met its financial performance standards. Describe how the school is financially sound.

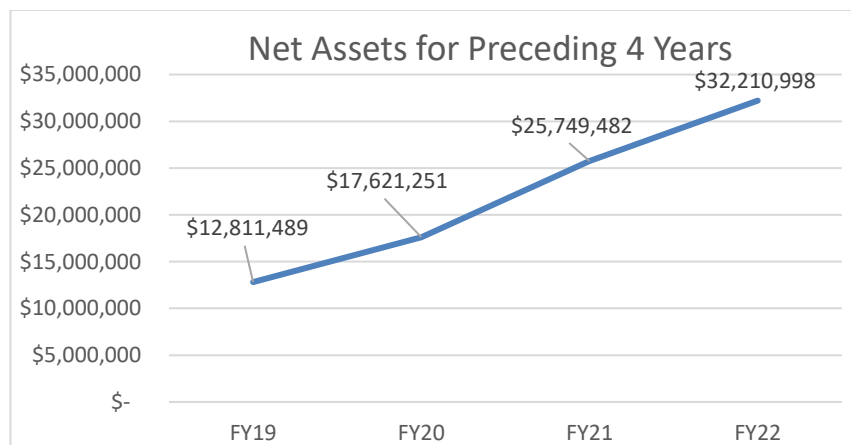
HAPA's financial goals include receiving annual unqualified audits and operating in a financial sound manner. The Hmong American Peace Academy has been audited every year since its inception (10/19/2001) as a not for profit corporation and has received an unqualified audit for each year of operation, indicative of proper accounting, management and financial stability; hence, HAPA is financially sound.

HAPA's Board of Directors reviews financial statements no less than quarterly. The Board's review includes the organization's Statement of Financial Position (also known as Balance Sheet) and the Statement of Financial Activities (also known as Income Statement). One of the multiple matrixes utilized by the Board includes the current ratio. The current ratio is current assets divided by current liabilities and is a measure of the

organization's ability to successfully meet its financial obligations. The goal is to maintain at least a 1.0 current ratio and this has been accomplished since the inception of the organization. The current ratio for the charter school contract period was as follows:



The Hmong American Peace Academy Ltd.'s goal is to show growth in its net assets (also known as net worth). The net assets or net worth in the preceding four years were as follows:



In conclusion, the organization has established a proven record of financial stability and has met its financial goals as established by the Board of Directors.

## Organizational Performance

5. Illustrate how the school has a well-functioning organizational structure. Include pertinent information about parental involvement, staffing, health and safety, school enrollment, discipline guidelines, and school facilities. Describe how the community partnerships have impacted students.

### Well-Functioning Organization:

HAPA is a well-functioning organization which provides students with rigorous academics, character development, and Hmong cultural values, preparing them to excel in colleges, universities and careers. HAPA honors tradition, forges new ground and

explores innovative ideas. It recognizes past history and looks forward to the journey that lies ahead. It is alive, empathetic, mindful and a servant leader. It builds bridges, mends fences, brings people together and creates new avenues toward success. HAPA stands as a beacon of hope and inspiration, always ready to lead the way and guide others.

The organizational structure of HAPA provides for the Chief Executive Officer who is the administrative director with responsibilities for all of the functions in the organization. The main function of the CEO is to oversee the operations of the organization. The Chief Executive Officer hires all the staff members including the administrative team and when necessary terminates staff members to ensure the success of the educational program of the school.

The organizational structure also includes a Chief of Staff (CoS) who's responsible for human capital including benefits, a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who manages the financial aspects of the organization, and a Chief Academic Officer (CAO) who leads and manages the day to day operations of the teaching and learning of HAPA and directly supports the academic leadership team.

### **Parental Involvement:**

As a charter school, HAPA prides itself in parent involvement as parents are the foundation for student achievement. HAPA seeks out multiple ways to engage our parents as parent involvement is a top priority at HAPA. HAPA has an outstanding parent involvement rate of nearly 100% actively participating in the parent-teacher conferences. School functions are well attended by the families where typically the average attendance is nearly 100%. Parents' participation in workshops, meetings, educational field experiences and school events are very high. HAPA students are succeeding due to the parent involvement.

### **Staffing**

As a well-functioning organization, HAPA complies with all state statutes and provisions of the charter school contract relative to the qualifications and hiring of individuals employed in the school. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that all certified staff hold a current and appropriate license or permit issued by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and complete a background screening.

HAPA provides opportunities for career advancement for our employees. Teacher leaders/departments chairs serve in curriculum development/alignment and help to create a culture of collaboration amongst their teacher groups. Teachers can advance to become leadership positions within the organization.

HAPA's staffing is consistent each year. In the times of teacher shortages, HAPA had a very small number of non-returning staff.



## **Health and Safety**

HAPA implements a comprehensive health and safety emergency plan to mitigate risks. The comprehensive emergency plan includes Code Blue AED Medical Emergency, Power Outage, Fire, Lockdown, and Tornado Drills including Crisis Plans for emergency site evacuations. Assuring the safety of HAPA's staff, students, and visitors are top priority. Staff are provided professional development sessions several times throughout the year on safety issues such as slips, trips, and falls.

Staff who are first responders are trained on how to react in a medical emergency. Classroom teachers and students are informed about their responsibilities as well. Lockdown drills and fire drills are performed several times throughout the school year. Staff are provided with the information and trained on how to quickly react in a safe manner when the need should arise.

HAPA is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment, free from any threats or acts of violence. Staff are provided a personnel policies manual. Included in the personnel policies manual is an anti-harassment policy. This policy reinforces HAPA's strong tradition of developing and maintaining a professional work environment comprised of people who respect one another and who believe in HAPA's high ideals.

## **School Enrollment**

During the contracted school years, HAPA has maintained a steady student enrollment increase year after year. As HAPA grows and expands, we anticipate its student enrollment will increase.

## **Discipline Guidelines:**

Hmong American Peace Academy and the entire community are dedicated to educating the whole person - mind, body, and spirit for peace and fullness of life. HAPA strives to foster and maintain a safe and peaceful environment to further engage in peacebuilding and building relationships through problem solving. The PeaceBuilders program outlines six principles for students to practice: praise people, give up put downs, seek wise people, notice and speak up about hurts one has caused, right wrongs, and help others. Capturing Kids' Hearts supports staff in developing positive relationships with students with the goal of student achievement.

At HAPA, we strive to find ways to problem solve between the offender and offended, and come up with action plans to prevent future offenses. More importantly, both programs offer conflict prevention skills, conflict resolution/remediation strategies, and ethics. A core concept of PeaceBuilders and Capturing Kids' Hearts is the idea of "relational capacity" (that a behavior intervention is only as successful as the relationship it is based on). With this in mind, disruptive behavior should be corrected whenever possible within the classroom by the teacher.

## **School Facilities**

Hmong American Peace Academy is housed in the parcel located at 4601 North 84<sup>th</sup> Street (formerly known as the Morse Middle School), which is called the Main Campus.

Currently, HAPA also leases the Denver Campus for the intermediate grades (3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>) while the main campus houses grades K4 to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>. HAPA has since purchased the parcel stated above from MPS and it has plans for future development to house its growing student enrollment where all educational programming will be located at the 84<sup>th</sup> Street parcel.

### **Community Partnerships**

This is an exciting time for HAPA. The school continues to achieve positive results and attract community partnerships. HAPA's Strategic Business Plan aims to leverage these strengths and raise the profile of the school to best serve the community and increase the impact for years to come. The strategic direction of HAPA is to focus on increasing both the quality and size of our K-12 education and in partnership with parents and other community organizations, offering an array of services to strengthen the HAPA community.

HAPA partnerships with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Mt. Mary University have allowed the high school scholars to earn dual credits, which benefit them greatly with college credits; thus, the potential of going to and through college is even greater than before.

Our partnerships with College Possible and All-In Milwaukee provides our current scholars with additional support in preparing for college. In addition, these supports continue through their college experience providing them with opportunities of internships and possibly higher compensated jobs as they graduate from college.

HAPA's continued partnerships with The Medical College of Wisconsin and Northwestern Mutual have provided opportunities for our scholars to explore professions in various fields including the medical field, Information Technology, and financial careers.

#### **6. Provide evidence that parents and students are satisfied with the school.**

HAPA believes that parents are valuable partners in the Academy's mission. When parents are involved in meaningful ways, the Academy improves and children do better. It is only through the partnership of school, family, and community that the children can truly make both academic and social gains. Hence, children at HAPA will achieve high levels of success with parental and community involvement and support.

Below are the results of the 2021-2022 parent survey indicating the parents/students satisfaction with the school:

Survey Question: Why have you chosen to send your scholar to HAPA?

Survey Results:

- "A great school."

- “Because I attended HAPA as an alumnae.”
- “My older kids attended there and the school had great programs.”
- “Because I want a better education for my children.”
- “It was the best school in Milwaukee.”
- “I want my children to learn more about their Hmong culture.”
- “I have chosen my scholar to attend HAPA because it’s a very good and safe school.”
- “Rigor curriculum. Hmong centered/focused. Family positive experience which encouraged us to send our kids to HAPA.”
- “Academics and exposure to Hmong culture.”
- “From the minute we toured HAPA, we knew it would be the right fit for our daughter.”
- “It was a top charter school.”
- “Because I have a lot of family members that attended HAPA with great feedback from the parents and I like how they teach Hmong.”
- “Rigorous curriculum.”
- “High academic reviews and comfort.”
- “HAPA has a strong curriculum structure.”
- “I want my children to learn more about their Hmong heritage.”
- “For their good reputation and for the Hmong experience.”
- “Better discipline and academics.”
- “High academic and peace building focus.”
- “Advance academic curriculum.”
- “A school I trust.”
- “Based on public records and ratings and also referrals from other parents.”
- “Environment and accelerated learning.”
- “Recommended by family members and friends.”
- “I love the foundation that HAPA instilled into their scholars starting in K4. I like that they try to implement Hmong culture, language and tradition. They have great teachers who give their all to the students.”

The vast majority of HAPA’s families have responded positively when asked on parent surveys if their scholars are prepared for college, challenged, safe, and cared for by school staff.

The over 95% daily attendance rate of students reflect their satisfaction with HAPA. Students are engaged in their learning during the school day and choose to stay after school so they receive academic assistance as well as participate in extracurricular sports/activities.

7. Demonstrate that the school has an active and effective school governance structure. Provide examples and explain.

HAPA itself has a well-developed board governance and committee structure in place, which guides Board operations. The Board of Directors of the Hmong American Peace Academy, Ltd., as the governing body, focuses its attention on matters of major policy, strategic planning and overall progress in achieving educational outcomes, vision and

mission and perform other oversight duties prescribed in the By-Laws. The Board of Directors manage the affairs of the organization. The Board monitors the educational outcomes of HAPA and ensures that HAPA is in compliance with its MPS contract as well as the vision, mission and goals of HAPA.

The Board of Directors hires the Chief Executive Officer and delegates power to the CEO to lead, manage, and direct the affairs of HAPA. Based on the recommendations of the Chief Executive Officer, the Board approves the annual budget. The Board does not involve itself in the management of day-to-day operations.

## **II. Plans for Continued Success**

### **Academic Performance**

1. Describe any proposed changes to the school's educational program for the term of the next charter school contract (up to five years).

For the Charter Contract renewal, HAPA is requesting to add the K3 program to its overall programming; hence, HAPA will serve scholars in K3 to 12<sup>th</sup> grades for this charter renewal.

The proposed changes to HAPA's educational program for the term of the next charter school contract is to eliminate the local measures of the pre-ACT program. HAPA will utilize the Forward, pre-ACT Secure, and ACT assessments.

HAPA's high school program will no longer focus in the fields of medicine, law, engineering, and/or business/economics for grades 9-12. Instead, HAPA will focus on the four areas of College and Career Readiness, Connection to Hmong Heritage, Community Leadership, and Commitment to Wellness and Joy. Thus, graduates of the Hmong American Peace Academy will embody the following:

**College and Career Readiness:** HAPA graduates possess the mindsets, skills, content knowledge, and variety of learning experiences needed to pursue college level study and the career of their choosing. They are independent, lifelong learners who have the confidence to set their own purpose, goals, and path to success.

**Connection to Hmong Heritage:** HAPA graduates hold comprehensive knowledge of Hmong culture, values, and language. They have reflected deeply on their personal, family, and community history and draw perseverance from their identity. They know where they come from, take pride in who they are and share their heritage with others.

**Community Leadership:** HAPA graduates model compassion, moral character, and peaceful action. They are critical thinkers, effective communicators, and collaborative problem-solvers who build respectful relationships with diverse community members. They have the courage to advocate for themselves and others in order to transform their local and global communities.

**Commitment to Wellness and Joy:** HAPA graduates maintain healthy habits of mind, body, and spirit. They have developed the social-emotional skills, self-knowledge, and adaptability to thrive in any environment. They cultivate a well-rounded range of interests in the pursuit of a fulfilled and meaningful life.

2. Provide the proposed enrollment and grade levels for the term of the next charter school contract.

HAPA is seeking a Full-Term (Term of 5 Years) Charter Contract, starting in the 2023-2024 school year to 2027-2028 school year.

With the addition of K3, HAPA is anticipating the enrollment increase below:

<u>Academic Year</u>	<u># of FTEs (Students/ Year)</u>	<u>Grade Levels</u>
2023 - 2024	1937	K3 to 12 <sup>th</sup>
2024 - 2025	1950	K3 to 12 <sup>th</sup>
2025 - 2026	1970	K3 to 12 <sup>th</sup>
2026 - 2027	1985	K3 to 12 <sup>th</sup>
2027 - 2028	2000	K3 to 12 <sup>th</sup>

3. Outline the school's goals and measurable objectives for the term of the next charter school contract and describe how the school intends to meet these goals.

HAPA will administer the Universal Screeners in the same manner and time frame as required by the MPS. The school shall annually administer the current Wisconsin State Assessment System (WSAS) (i.e., Wisconsin Forward Exam, and ACT Aspire), the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM), the Alternate Assessment System for eligible students with special needs when applicable, and the ACCESS for English Language Learners (ELLs) in the same manner and time frame as required by the Department of Public Instruction. This includes the final State Assessment of the current ACT, which is administered to 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.

HAPA intends to meet the goals and measurable objectives for the term of the next charter school contract whereas HAPA scholars will meet/exceed MPS academic standards for the tested grades.

In addition to testing, students will have a collection of their work samples and formative and summative assessments throughout the course of the school year. The collection sample is used to monitor students' overall growth toward master of grade level State Standards. Below are the focus areas:

- All scholars will graduate from high school with the core academic skills and knowledge to succeed in college.

- All scholars will graduate from high school with an individualized, financially sustainable post-secondary college and/or career plan.
- All scholars graduate with the ability to demonstrate their knowledge of Hmong culture, history, language and personal identity.
- All scholars graduate ready to lead and improve their communities, with the essential skills of effective communication, collaborative problem-solving, adaptability to diverse environments, as well as self-knowledge and personal confidence.

Both formative and summative classroom-based assessments are used to support students in attaining basic and analytical skills, as well as the knowledge they need, to succeed in their academic future. Students will also be issued report cards throughout the year to track their gradual progress and achievement with respect to the educational goals under *S. 118.01*. Parent conferences will be held each fall and spring where parents will have the opportunity to inquire more about their child's development and progress.

Student achievement is recognized throughout the year in large and small group assemblies. Students are affirmed and recognized for their positive contributions to the educational community helping them to develop qualities of good global citizens.

#### **Financial Performance**

4. Explain the school's financial plans and forecast.

The Hmong American Peace Academy Board of Directors intends to continue to expand its educational services as future enrollment is expected to continue to grow. Due to increased enrollment the Hmong American Peace Academy Board of Directors has developed a strategic plan to address near and long term future facility needs. In conclusion, the organization is well positioned for future growth by additional development of its campus at 4601 N 84<sup>th</sup> Street to service the students of Milwaukee. The costs of such additional development are financially feasible through the utilization of bond financing. The organization will continue to be financially prudent and the future promises to enhance HAPA's financial capabilities and stability.

#### **Organizational Performance**

5. Illustrate plans for strengthening parental and community involvement in the school's educational mission.

Parents have played a key role in the creation of HAPA's Portrait of a Graduate and Strategic Plan through surveys and listening sessions. School principals communicate with parents on a weekly basis and we are offering opportunities throughout the year for parents to engage around our shared interests in their scholars' education.

HAPA has a comprehensive plan for parent and family involvement. HAPA believes that students, the parents and the school all must work together to achieve success. HAPA consistently engages parents in the following ways:

- Activities through the school year (i.e., Fall-HAPA's Annual Fall Festival; Winter-HAPA Annual Hmong New Year celebration; Spring-Annual Science Fairs);
- Volunteer opportunities involve high school students, parents, and the community
- HAPA will continue its successful parent-teacher conferences with nearly 100% parent participation rate;
- Monthly principal-parent meeting
- Principal(s) send weekly family communications.
- Teachers send weekly family communications.
- Quarterly HAPA-wide school-parent problem-solving meetings.
- Family communications from the Executive Team every two months.

In addition, HAPA's Board of Directors has adopted a Strategic Plan, which provides organizational strategic directions with strategic priorities. One of those strategic priorities is community engagement where HAPA will engage with both the Hmong community and the broader Greater Milwaukee community with relationship building for impact and sustainability.

6. Describe any changes to the school's governance structure.

Currently, HAPA does not plan to make changes to the school's governance structure. However, should HAPA move into that direction, the Academy will communicate the changes to the Department of Contracted School Services.