

# Carmen

SCHOOLS OF  
Science & Technology

*"Graduating students as critical thinkers and self-directed learners who are prepared for success in college, meaningful careers, community involvement and family life."*

July 14, 2020

Bridget Schock

Office of Contracted Services  
Milwaukee Public Schools  
5225 W. Vliet Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53208

Dear Ms. Schock,

Carmen Schools of Science and Technology, Inc. wishes to give you notice of our intent to participate in the renewal process with Milwaukee Public Schools on behalf of four schools:

Carmen School of Science and Technology, South Campus,  
Carmen School of Science and Technology, Northwest Campus,  
Carmen School of Science and Technology, Southeast Campus, and  
Carmen Middle School of Science and Technology, South Campus.

Our mission is to serve Milwaukee students most in need of an education that results in: ***Graduating all students as critical thinkers and self-directed learners prepared for success in college, meaningful careers, community involvement, and family life.*** Partnering with MPS ensures that we can support a wide array of families in high need neighborhoods. We believe we have produced good results for MPS and have been excellent stewards of public resources. We want to successfully complete the charter renewal process with MPS so we can continue to put those resources toward building strong communities of active learners, ready to be the next generations of Milwaukeeans to tackle the challenges our city faces.

If you have any questions about our intent, please contact us.

Sincerely,



Ivan Gamboa  
Board President



Jennifer Lopez  
Chief Executive Officer

Carmen South: 1712 South 32<sup>nd</sup> St., Milwaukee, WI 53215 | p: 414.384.4444 | f: 414.384.4455  
Carmen Northwest: 5496 North 72<sup>nd</sup> St., Milwaukee, WI 53218 | p: 414-837-4000 | f: 414-837-3990  
Carmen Southeast: 2500 West Oklahoma Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53215 | p: 414-509-7800 | f: 414-509-7850  
Carmen Middle School, South: 2433 South 15th St., Milwaukee, WI 53215 | p: 414-310-8056 | f: 414-930-4331  
Stellar Elementary: 2431 South 10th St., Milwaukee, WI 53215 | p: 414-310-8056 | f: 414-930-4331

[www.carmenschools.org](http://www.carmenschools.org)

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SCHOOLS OF  
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*"Graduating students as critical thinkers and self-directed learners prepared for success in college, meaningful careers, community involvement and family life."*

**Submitted to:** Milwaukee Public Schools Board of Directors

**Submission Date:** August 31, 2020

**Respectfully submitted by:** Carmen Schools of Science and Technology

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## **CARMEN SCHOOLS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Charter Renewal Application August 31, 2020

Carmen Schools of Science and Technology (“Carmen”) is pleased to submit this application to renew its current charter contract with Milwaukee Public Schools (“MPS”) for four different schools:

- Carmen School of Science and Technology, South Campus (“South”)
- Carmen School of Science and Technology, Northwest Campus (“Northwest”)
- Carmen School of Science and Technology, Southeast Campus (“Southeast”)
- Carmen Middle School of Science and Technology, South Campus (“South Middle”)

### **I. Response to Current Charter School Performance Educational Performance**

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

Carmen Schools of Science and Technology has earned the distinguished honor of being a state and nationally recognized network of schools. Carmen students consistently perform in the top quartile of public high schools in Milwaukee on all performance measures, including ACT scores, attendance, mobility, and college enrollment. Carmen South has been consistently ranked among the top ten Wisconsin schools in one or both of the U.S. News & World Report’s Best High Schools listings, and the Washington Post’s Most Challenging High Schools listings. Carmen South has been recognized by the Department of Public Instruction in beating the odds two years in a row. Additionally, Carmen South is the only high school in Milwaukee awarded a five star rating on the State Report card, Significantly Exceeding Expectations with an overall rating of 88.7 and a perfect 100/100 on School Growth.

Carmen Northwest, Carmen’s second campus, scored highest among all public schools in Milwaukee that serve grades 6-12 or 9-12 on the annual Wisconsin State Report Card “Closing the Gap” score in 2017. Carmen has been faithful in implementing our educational program with test scores exceeding district average, nearly 100% college acceptance rate, and over 95% attendance despite 90% of the student population living below the federal poverty level.

**Mission: To graduate all students as critical thinkers and self-directed learners prepared for success in college, meaningful careers, community involvement, and family life.**

To achieve its mission, for the past thirteen years, Carmen created an educational model with three core components:

- A. College preparatory curricula that emphasizes STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
- B. Multiple intervention opportunities to support the average Carmen student who enters middle or high school two or more years behind in literacy and math skills
- C. A College and Career-readiness program that includes college seminars for all juniors and seniors, an advisory curriculum run by teachers, student internships in the workplace, character education, and related elements.

**A. STEM Focused College-Prep.** Studies have consistently shown that the single factor with the highest correlation to a student actually completing a college education is the academic rigor of the student’s high school curriculum as manifested in the number and types of academic courses completed. ACT research also shows that students taking these courses also score higher on the ACT and those meeting the college readiness benchmarks are more likely to pass courses in the first year of college.

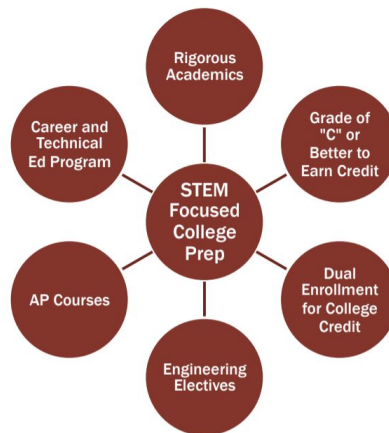
Carmen’s academic course and credit requirements for graduation continue to be more rigorous than any public or private high school in Milwaukee. To graduate from a Carmen high school, students must take:

- Five year-long college preparatory courses in English
- Four year long courses in each of the following subjects:
  - Mathematics (beginning with Algebra 1)
  - Laboratory Science
  - History / Social Sciences
- Three years of Spanish (native speakers take courses focused on reading and writing mastery taught predominantly in Spanish)
- One year of fine arts and/or music

Students at any Carmen high school campus can choose between eight-ten different Advanced Placement (AP) courses representing all core subject areas as well as Psychology, Spanish, and Art.

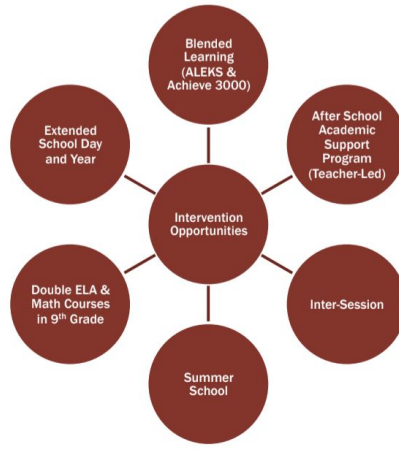
Middle school students must take

- In three years
  - College preparatory English
  - Math with double math courses in sixth grade
  - Laboratory Science
  - Social Studies
- Spanish in 7th and 8th grade at the South Middle campus
- Electives in the Arts



**B. Intervention Opportunities.** While the core academic components of Carmen’s education model are critical to student success, reaching all students requires supplementary programs and individualized approaches that complement and support core academics. Three week

midyear intersession and summer session terms, an extended school year and school day, additional time and courses for mathematics in sixth grade and English and Algebra in ninth grade, an after school academic program taught by teachers, and on-line personalized learning for enrichment and improvement of math and literacy skills are examples of resources available to students to ensure they can remain at or above grade level in all subject areas and meet their annual growth goals.



**C. College and Career Readiness.** College and career readiness continues to be a hallmark of Carmen’s program. Just as Carmen ensures every student takes academic coursework and receives support to ensure a four-year college is a true option, Carmen also ensures all students engage in career-focused experiences such as internships, apprenticeships, career exploration, and skill development around time management, financial planning and other abilities that prepare all students for life-sustaining careers.

In 2016 at Carmen Northwest and in 2017 at Carmen South and Carmen Southeast, a career and technical education program was launched to address southeastern Wisconsin’s job growth in information technology and health care careers. In a unique partnership with Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC), Froedtert Hospital and the Medical College of Wisconsin, and the Milwaukee Bucks, Carmen students and low-income adults from the community are taking certified nursing assistant (CNA), health care customer service and any of three Information Technology (IT) related technical diploma and certification pathway courses at Carmen for dual credit. These courses are taken as electives and supplement the college preparatory course requirements. Upon completion, students may enter paid health care oriented apprenticeships at Froedtert Hospital and other health care organizations (for Certified Nursing Assistants) and IT apprenticeships at Froedtert Hospital, the Milwaukee Bucks, Advocate Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center, Ascension Health, Johnson Controls, and other area corporations.



***Other program features***

Social Emotional Learning: Carmen educates the whole child by providing a rigorous education and social-emotional support to empower students to thrive at school, college, and the competitive world beyond. One component of social emotional education is Circles, a structured social emotional curriculum that helps students become more aware of self, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Student Onboarding: Carmen’s Student Bridge, Senior Boot Camp, Advisory and Community Service programs continue to build culture and support the core program components. All students new to Carmen undertake a week-long academic and sociocultural Student Bridge to Middle or High School Program before the start of the regular school year where they set individual annual growth and development goals defining objectives and strategies for achieving the school-wide goal of attending and completing a college education and being prepared for a family-sustaining career. Seniors also arrive a week early to focus on learning about the college application process, work on college essays, and begin to plan for their life after Carmen.

Advisories: Between Student Bridge and Senior Bootcamp, all students remain grouped in a ~20 student advisory and matched with a single advisor for their tenure at Carmen. Advisors monitor the academic, behavior, and social/emotional growth of each advisee and help organize and facilitate numerous service learning projects throughout the year. The advisor is the first line of communication between school and families and provides regular communication outside of twice-yearly parent advisor conferences.

Community Service: Students complete 30 hours (middle school) to 80 hours (high school) of community service to help students see their role in the broader world and to gain more life experiences to contextualize their academic learning.

Qualified Teachers: All Carmen teachers are licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in the subjects they teach. In the most recent school year (2019-2020), 94% of Carmen’s teachers held initial or professional educator licenses, with 6% pending. New teachers undertake a week of training before returning teachers start, then new and returning teachers work together for an additional week of professional development before Freshman Bridge and

Senior Bootcamp. Carmen employs a modified Charlotte Danielson framework to evaluate teachers. STEM and literacy specialists support the school principal in coaching all teachers, regardless of level of experience. Coaching is based on individual teacher professional development goals. Progress toward individual teacher goals is monitored by regular classroom visits and debriefs (i.e., at least bi-weekly), the results of which are documented using an on-line tool.

**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 outcomes.**

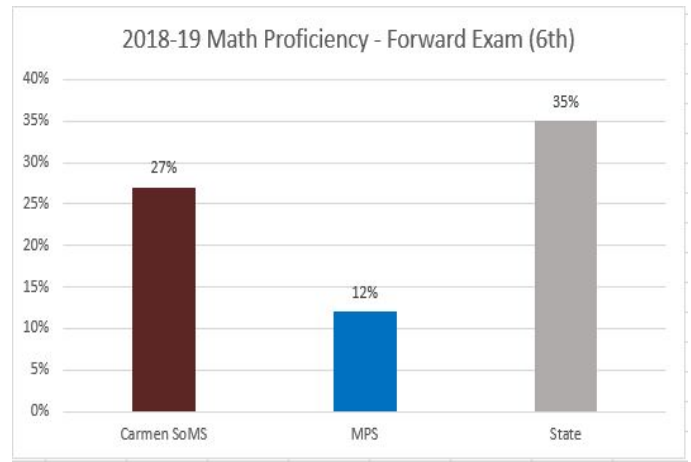
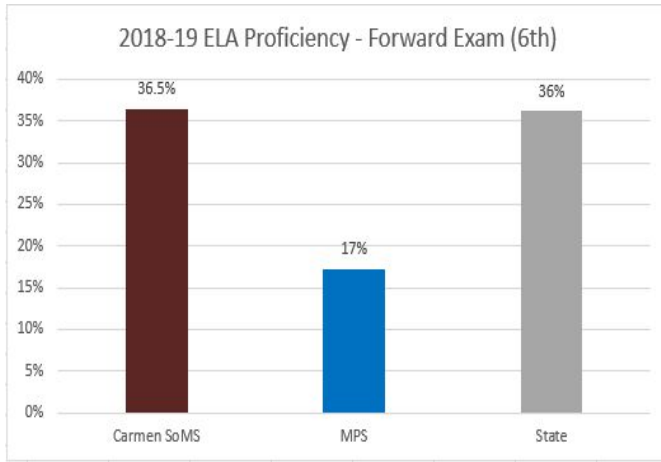
**Highlights of Student Achievement include:**

- Carmen South High School ranked 2nd in the state 2018-2019 school year and 8th in the state 2019-2020 school year by US News and World Report.
- Carmen ACT ELA Average Score results for African American students exceed State and Milwaukee Public Schools ELA Average Scores.
- Carmen South High School is one in seven MPS schools to earn a five-star rating for the 2018-2019 school year; the only high school to be recognized with a five-star rating.
- The top growth rating of any school in the state. Carmen earned a perfect score of 100 on student growth on the state report card.
- Carmen South Middle School's ELA Forward results were on par with state ELA Forward results in 2018-2019 school year.
- Carmen possesses 100% family attendance to Student - Teacher conferences.
- Carmen South High School and Carmen Southeast High School have both exceeded the ACT Statewide for grade 11 for Latinxs/Hispanics.
- Student attendance at Carmen South High School consistently averages above 96%.
- In 2018, Carmen South High School was the top-rated school in the city of Milwaukee as determined by Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) State Report Cards. DPI State Report Card ranked Carmen South High School (2018-19) as eighteenth overall school and third high school in Milwaukee County at 88.7 (Significant Exceeds Expectations).<sup>1</sup>
- DPI has recognized Carmen South High School, a Title 1 school, with the Beating the Odds Award (2018 and 2019). This is due to above average student achievement in reading and mathematics when compared to schools from similarly sized districts, schools, grade configurations and poverty levels.

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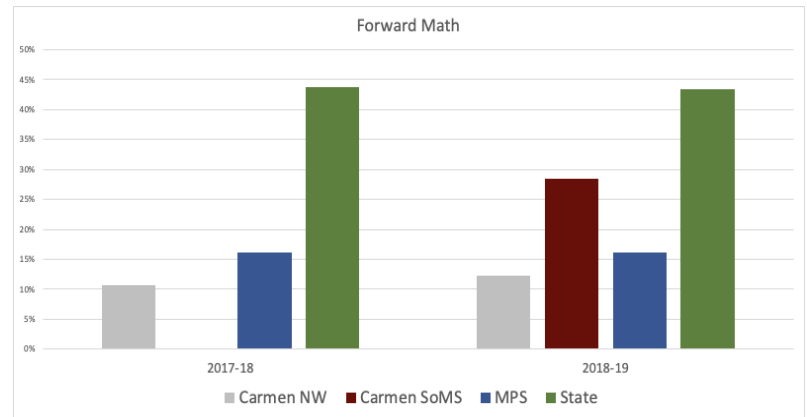
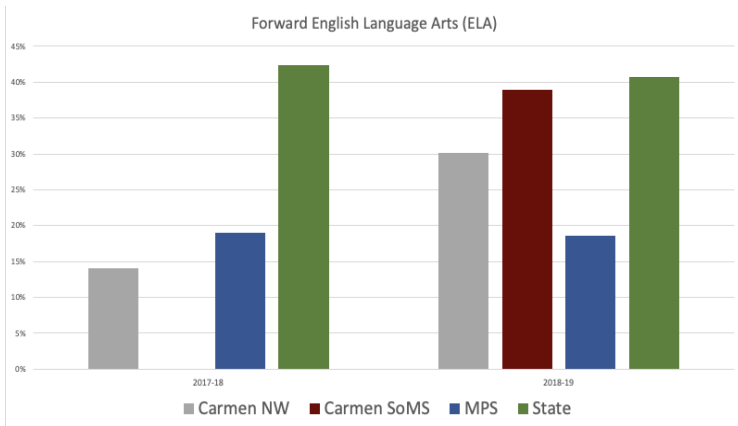
<sup>1</sup> [https://www.mmac.org/uploads/1/1/3/5/113552797/mscsc-overall\\_scores\\_2018-19v2.pdf](https://www.mmac.org/uploads/1/1/3/5/113552797/mscsc-overall_scores_2018-19v2.pdf)

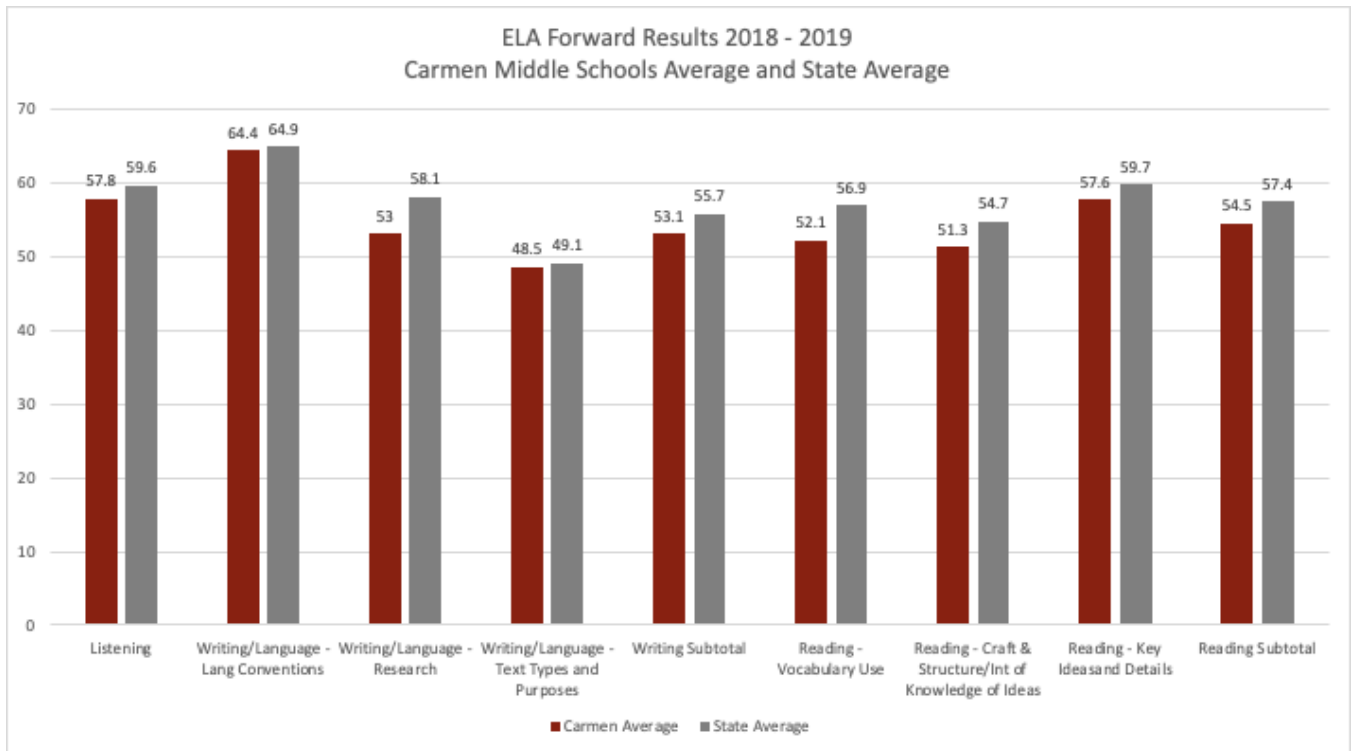




**State Forward Assessment.** MAP test scores for Carmen Northwest sixth graders show students arrive at Carmen Northwest in the fifth to seventh national percentile in reading and math, well below grade level. In 2017-18 Carmen Northwest Middle School (NWMS) suffered a decrease in the number of students who performed advanced/proficient on the Forward exam due to a breakdown in school culture. New leadership was brought in and increases occurred in one year. During the 2018-19 school year Carmen Northwest Middle School went from 14% to 30% in the State Assessment, more than **doubling** its proficiency/advanced rate and exceeded district performance by 12%.

Carmen South Middle School, in its first year of operation reported a 39% advanced/proficiency rate, 1% shy of meeting the state advance/proficiency rate, and exceeded district performance by 20%. The graphs below reflect Carmen’s growth in student achievement from 2017-18 to 2018-19.





As evidenced by results, Carmen is closing the achievement gap between Milwaukee's highest needs students and their peers.

**ACT Aspire.** According to the Department of Public Instruction's WISEdash, all three Carmen high schools, Carmen South, Carmen Southeast, and Carmen Northwest, are among the top ten of the 24 high schools in ACT Aspire scores. Carmen students met or exceeded proficiency at a higher rate than many of their peers for English Language Arts (ELA) benchmarks in 2018-2019.

When compared to MPS high schools in ACT Aspire Reading Advanced/Proficiency results,

- Carmen South ranked fourth,
- Carmen Southeast ranked sixth,
- Carmen Northwest ranked eighth behind four of MPS's admissions-based schools.

When compared to MPS high schools in ACT English Advanced/Proficiency results,

- Carmen South ranked third,
- Carmen Southeast ranked fifth,
- Carmen Northwest at seventh behind selective admissions MPS high schools.

According to the Department of Public Instruction WISEdash, Carmen Northwest and Carmen South are second and third, respectively, for college enrollment the fall after high school among all 24 of the MPS high schools. Carmen tracks the college enrollment status of all Carmen graduates for at least six years after their high school graduation. DPI publishes college enrollment data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) and these rates are lower than what Carmen has tracked and documented for its students.

There are several key reasons for this discrepancy. The NSC assembles enrollment data reported by colleges and universities. Many students who are undocumented are not counted in the NSC data because the reporting mechanism used by some colleges includes social security numbers. Carmen has about 30% undocumented students in each graduating class and thus NSC reports on college enrollment of Carmen grads are always lower than the actual numbers. Also, colleges pay a fee to have their data included in the NSC and some smaller colleges and historically black colleges and universities choose not to participate, leading to under-reporting.

Graduating classes at Carmen Northwest have consistently enrolled in college the fall after high school graduation at or above 85%; Carmen South has had fall after graduation college enrollment percentages in the mid-80's since it graduated its first class in 2011, despite its relatively high concentration of undocumented students who do not qualify for federal financial aid.

**High School Graduation Rate.** Carmen's high schools have a lower 4-year high school graduation rate than some other high schools because its schools have different graduation requirements and grading policies (e.g., "D's" don't count for credit) and students who don't earn the necessary course credits are expected to stay a 5th year. However, Carmen's 4-year graduation rate is the same as, or higher than, the high school graduation rate in all MPS high schools.

Additionally, Carmen's graduation rates for students who graduate in five years is 97.3% and for students who graduate in six years is 100%. Both figures are above MPS graduation rates.

**Promotion.** Carmen's program is designed to eliminate social promotion and to graduate all students ready for college and family-sustaining careers. In 2018-2019, all Carmen schools met or exceeded benchmarks for graduation and promotion rates although these benchmarks are secondary to the program goal of ensuring graduates are prepared to succeed in college. Carmen maintains high expectations with high supports to ensure all students are prepared for their next academic step.

**ACT.** The average ACT composite score based on the best official score for the Class of 2020 is 18.0 for all three high schools combined. The most recently published Wisconsin averages were for 2018-2019 and showed subgroup composites as follows: 16.8 for economically-disadvantaged, 16.7 for Latinx, 14.8 for Black, which is significantly below Carmen network composites. However, 96% of Carmen 11th graders took the ACT in March 2020 before school closures. Unfortunately, due to widespread school closures related to COVID-19, there is limited testing data for 2019-2020 school year. Carmen is confident that all schools would have demonstrated continued growth.

**STEM-Focused College Preparation.** Challenging coursework, including a range of Advanced Placement courses, prepares students for immediate post-secondary success. STEM-focused college-preparation exposes students to high level skills and content:

- **Mathematics coursework.** Because of the correlation between high level math courses and success in college, all seniors take higher level math courses. 100% of Carmen graduates have passed four math courses in order to graduate. 89% of graduating Class of 2020 passed Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus and/or AP Calculus, which is the

program norm. The other 11% of students passed Pre-Algebra, Algebra, Geometry and Algebra II before graduating.

- **Advanced Placement (AP) courses.** Currently, Carmen offers twenty-one AP courses at three high schools: 2D-Art and Design, Biology, Calculus AB, English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, Human Geography, Psychology, Spanish Language and Culture, Spanish Literature and Culture, US Government and Politics. All students are encouraged to take at least one AP course during high school to give them confidence that they can master college-level coursework. Seventy-three percent of the Class of 2020 graduates (across all three high schools) participated in AP courses during their high school career, and 46% passed one or more exams.
- **Interventions to support all students.** To ensure each and all students can be successful, Carmen schools offer a wide-range of tiered interventions. School teams build significant tier one intervention opportunities into daily learning and iterate on them strategically to speed growth and prepare the majority of students to graduate on time. Some academic and behavior-focused interventions include:
- **Double math in sixth grade.** Recognizing that students enter middle school several grade levels behind, Carmen provides a “double math” period for sixth graders to accelerate their learning prepared to conquer Algebra and/or take Geometry as ninth graders. This approach should result in more students taking Precalculus and/or AP Calculus. ALEKS continues to provide extra skill-building and gap-filling support for sixth grade students as well.

**Achieve 3000.** As part of the commitment to increase reading abilities, especially at NWMS, middle school staff focused on inspiring students to use Achieve 3000, an online reading resource that individualizes skill building. In 2019-2020, individual NWMS students earned “Daily Top Scorer: Wisconsin” recognition on several occasions for completing the most articles with 75% accuracy - against all students in the state. Students’ average Lexile scores at NWMS grew 111 points (sixth grade), 104 points (seventh grade), and 157 points (eighth grade) between October 2019 and March 2020, which far surpasses anticipated growth for a full year (over 2x the amount in the case of eighth grade). NWMS was declared “Winner of the Read to Succeed Contest” two times in a six month period.

**Spanish support.** Network staff added a Spanish literature and language emphasis at South Middle after a recent review and alignment of Spanish curriculum to ensure students receive culturally responsive programming. An English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher at the Southeast campus, which has the highest concentration of older students with little or no English proficiency when they arrive at Carmen, supports classroom teachers, as they employ strategies to grow student proficiency in both languages. In addition to higher Spanish-speaking parent and student satisfaction, student success will look like more students showing faster growth and increased participation and pass rates on AP Spanish Literature and Language exams.

**Restorative practices.** Middle school advisors are trained in social emotional curriculum (see Appendix B) to help students understand and manage their emotions. Valor-inspired scholar circles provide one tool used to teach students to give praise and empathize with each other and to have constructive conversations about bullying and how to direct anger, which results in fewer conflicts.

For example, in 2018-2019, the suspension rate at South Middle was 0%, and 11% at NWMS, down from 51.7% in 2017-2018. (This compares to a 59.3% suspension rate in 2017-2018 and 55.3% suspension rate in 2018-2019 for sixth-eighth grade students district-wide<sup>2</sup>.)

**College and Career-Readiness.** College and career-readiness internal outcomes provide the richest, most measurable data outside of PAAR benchmarks because these data result from longitudinal work that went into curriculum, culture and structures.

- **Internship scholarships.** Carmen graduates have earned \$671,299.00 in Student Internship Program (SIP) scholarships since 2012. Forty-six total internship students participated in 2019-2020 at 26 different employer placements. Students who participate in the Student Internship Program are eligible to earn \$500-\$1,000 in scholarship funds per semester. Thirty-six CO2020 graduates earned a total of \$143,000 in Student Internship Program scholarships for their years of work in local businesses and nonprofits.
- **College scholarships.** Class of 2020 students earned a total of over \$24.8 million in scholarships. Sixty-two percent of all graduates earned at least one scholarship, and 73% of the founding class at Southeast earned at least one scholarship. One hundred and nine Carmen graduates earned over \$132,000 of the approximately \$500,000 in Kelben scholarships awarded to students at 41 different Milwaukee area high schools.
- **STEM-related opportunities.** Carmen's Southeast campus has built a partnership with the ACE (Architecture, Construction and Engineering) Program, with plans to extend to other Carmen campuses. In 2019-2020, twenty-five Carmen Southeast students completed the program, finishing their group projects and presentations virtually. Three students received a total of \$20,000 in scholarships from both the local and national organizations of ACE, and one student completed a paid summer internship as a direct result of the program. In addition, two other students participated in an Actuarial Internship, supported by the Office of Contracted Services.
- **Northwest Middle students.** Eighteen members (29%) of the graduating class of 2020 at NWMS attended Carmen NWMS; Seven of these 18 were in the top 10 of their class (based on GPA). The class of 2020's valedictorian, salutatorian, and the student coming in as the third highest GPA all entered Carmen NWMS in sixth grade. Both valedictorian and salutatorian will attend the University of Iowa with full scholarships in fall 2020.
- **Dual credit.** One hundred and nineteen or 46% of the class of 2020 graduates took at least one dual enrollment course (technical education or academic). Since the inception of the IT and medical programs in 2016, 100 Students have participated in the MATC Healthcare Customer Service (HCS) courses, 38 students have participated in the Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) courses, and 100 students have participated in Information Technology (IT) courses. In 2019-2020 alone, 135 total students participated in some phase of the program. Twenty South students, 40 Southeast students, and 20 Northwest students took MATC/WCTC coursework; 45 students from all high schools enrolled in the IT coding pilot; and 10 Southeast CNA students earned full certification through Quality Healthcare Options.

**College tours.** Junior college tours remain critical to meeting Carmen's mission because this support ensures all students - regardless of resources - have personal experience with a range of

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<sup>2</sup> Suspension rate data given here is the total of incidents for sixth-eighth graders divided by the number of pupils enrolled in sixth-eighth grade according to <https://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov/Dashboard/dashboard/16840>.

college options. This year's plans for Junior College Tours (March 25 - 27, 2020) included 394 students, 45 chaperones, 9 buses, 45 campus visits to 41 different colleges in six states. COVID-19 closed schools two weeks before travel could begin, but College Transition Coordinators at each site are developing other virtual tour opportunities for this group of students.

**Alumni.** Carmen tracks graduates to and through college via the National Clearinghouse and through individual contacts. At least 23 alumni have graduated with STEM degrees, and an additional seven have graduated with education degrees. Eight Carmen staff and seven interns are currently employed at Carmen in a range of roles, including College Post-Transition (Alumni) Coordinator, teachers, and an Assistant Principal. To increase the value of a Carmen education for graduates, four alumni launched an alumni network in January 2020 with an event that attracted over 50 graduates.

**Representative graduates.** In fall, many Class of 2020 graduates without documentation, from few financial resources, and/or who are first generation college-goers are bound for college with full and partial scholarships or to life-sustaining jobs or programs. Some notable exemplars include:

- A graduate with disabilities will be attending a state school in North Dakota on scholarship
- A graduate without documentation earned a full-ride scholarship through The Dream-US Opportunity Scholarship
- A graduate earned the Marquette University Urban Scholarship (full-tuition scholarship), joining eight other Carmen Urban Scholars
- A graduate who will be first in her family to go to college will attend the University of Chicago with full financial support

**Carmen children of Carmen staff.** Currently eleven Carmen staff with school-age children have a total of 16 children attending a Carmen school, while two staff are parents of two Carmen alums. This small but meaningful measure of success continues to increase.

**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.**

Carmen's response to COVID-19 has been built with a focus on students' school experience and defining what success looks like and strategies towards meeting it. Carmen continues to remain nimble facing an unclear 2020 - 2021 school year and has developed a mindset amongst leaders, teachers, and staff to align actions towards the same vision. At the highest level, Carmen is committed to having...

- Every student at Carmen be known, loved, educated and prepared for success in college, careers and life
- Every student know that adults care about them, check in on them, provide them the support they need to be prepared and successfully graduate from college and be prepared for family sustaining careers
- Every student feels a sense of inclusivity and belonging
- Every student can count on consistency - academic, behavioral, emotional



constancy of staff at Carmen

After the announcement for school closures was made on Friday, March 13, 2020, Carmen launched a virtual learning platform on Monday, March 16th. Within a week of closing, staff distributed 1,036 chromebooks to students and supplied over 500 educational packets. Teachers created YouTube learning channels and constructed Google Classrooms to begin teaching. One hundred percent of families were contacted within the first week of schools closing to check on their well-being, learn of their access to technology, and ask their feedback on distance learning plans.

Two weeks after physically closing, Carmen revised the distance learning approach based on students, parent and teacher feedback. After spring break, Carmen launched “Distance Learning 2.0” with increased live lessons and greater collaboration between content teachers in high school in particular. Over the course of the pandemic, Carmen strengthened the approach to live, synchronous instruction by scheduling consistent, daily classes and recording the lessons for students unable to participate live. Teachers conducted weekly check-ins with their students to gauge the success of the distance learning experience.

<b>Direct Instruction or Inquiry</b> ≈0.5-1 hour/day	<b>Classroom Conversation</b> ≈1 hour/day	<b>Practice and Application</b> ≈0.5-1 hour/day	<b>Assessment and Feedback</b> ≈1-3 hour/day	<b>Communication*</b> ≈1 hour/day
Introduce students to a concept and build upon their existing knowledge. Sample tasks include, but are not limited to:  -Researching and choosing appropriate texts -Scripting, recording, and uploading video mini-lessons -Designing inquiry based tasks and prompts -Accommodating/modifying materials as necessary -Creating materials to meet IEP goals	Content-based discussions among small groups of students and/or the whole class. Sample activities include, but are not limited to:  -Group chats -Chat boards -Group texts -Conference calls -Video calls	Allow students to practice and apply what they have learned. Sample activities include, but are not limited to:  -Problem sets -Texts with standards-based questions/text analysis -Virtual partner work -Responding to questions related to a virtual lab or video  Written work: reflection, journal entries, CER, essays	Assess students progress and provide individualized feedback on any key assessments.  Methods of feedback include, but are not limited to:  -Instant feedback through a Google Form quiz -Individual/group emails or phone calls with specific feedback -Written feedback on google docs -Using a rubric to assess an evaluation and sharing results -Texting with a student to provide	Communicate with students regarding both their academic needs and any social-emotional needs.  <i>Academic Check-Ins</i> Individual Student Check ins, as needed Office Hours: 1 hr/day Office Hours/ Resource Time: 1 hr/day Check in with caseload students: 1x/week Parent check in with caseload students: 1x/week  <i>Advisor/Wellness Check-Ins</i> 3 touch points per

			feedback	week: Elem: M/W/F MS/HS:: M: Advisee W: Advisee F: Family
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Though this increase was promising, students, families, and staff all agreed to review the distance learning approach for summer school and the new year. The Spring distance learning curriculum was open resource making it publicly available to all students and families in the city.

In May, Carmen administered a survey to families to hear their thoughts about distance learning thus far as well as their fears, greatest causes of concern and hopes for the fall. Analysis of the May Family Survey results influenced changes to the summer models; incorporating feedback from staff and families to ensure greater success for students. These shifts included:

- Live lessons daily, coupled with independent work that could be completed “offline”
- Daily grades that both students and families can access to see progress
- Increased tech training for both students and teachers

With this vision in mind we have drafted plans and revised them based on input from students, staff, and families. We have studied the approaches of schools, districts, and charter networks across the country, kept up to date on the research from local, state, and national health experts and kept the following principles in mind as we have planned for our fall learning model:

- Prioritize safety.
- Keep students learning.
- Better our best.
- Flexibly adapt.
- Plan for most, support for all.

**Social Emotional Support and Family Communication.** As noted in the above table, over eighteen hundred middle and high school students checked in with teachers individually three times per week and included their families on Fridays. Communication was conducted through phone calls, text messages, and video conferencing. Schools such as Stellar and Carmen South Middle School continued with social emotional lessons, and Carmen Southeast High School held a weekly Facebook Live teaching students mindfulness exercises.

In addition to reaching out to students and families individually, each campus worked to maintain its student culture by hosting weekly “virtual assemblies,” student-based and parent-based town hall and “Family” meetings, video montages to raise spirits and celebrate successes, as well as host end of year events for graduation and promotion to high school. Northwest Middle and High continued virtual student and family town hall sessions throughout the summer to support staff planning efforts and meet student needs.

Through staff calls, Carmen surveys, and Network outreach to families, Carmen was able to support members of the Carmen community negatively impacted through an emergency relief



fund. Carmen serves more than 2,000 students in grades K4-12 across the city of Milwaukee. Ninety percent of students come from low-income households, and they were among the first to feel the impact of the COVID-19 health crisis.

Within the first week of schools physically closing and in response to the many needs Carmen families shared, Carmen established the Carmen Emergency Relief Fund. Through individual and foundation donations, Carmen raised over \$217,500, and this funding has supported families who have lost jobs or have had their health impacted due to COVID-19. Families received financial support to pay for utility and medical bills. Carmen established relationships with Pete’s Market and El Rey to pay for the groceries of Carmen families’ who experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19.

Carmen families completed a survey sharing their opinions on fall reopening; the survey reflected many of the survey questions MPS sent to families regarding reopening. Carmen received responses from over 1800 of the ~2200 current and incoming students’ families. Through this survey, Carmen learned families’:

- Opinions on school reopening scenarios in the fall
- Concerns families have with a distance learning approach (childcare, technology, schedule)
- Needs for their student to be successful with a distance learning approach (communication, tech support for guardians, social emotional learning, student interaction)
- Access to technology and internet

May 2020 Family Survey Results	% Strongly Agree/Agree
I feel that decisions made by Carmen have students and families in mind.	92%
My child is engaged in digital distance learning each day.	90%
Over the last three months, my child has had a personal connection with a teacher, staff member, or classmate at their school.	90%
My child has consistent access to the internet to complete all daily assignments and learning.	95%
Online learning platforms that my child uses (Google Classroom, Zearn, Raz Kids, Khan Academy, etc) are easy to access and use.	97%
I am satisfied with my student's remote learning experience.	89%

This information supported the approach to Carmen’s distance learning fall reopening. Carmen gained a better understanding of families’ opinions and experiences during the pandemic, what they need for their students to be successful, and how Carmen can best teach and communicate to meet their needs.

In addition to support through the end of the 2019-2020 school year, Carmen Schools of Science and Technology offered an extended summer school program to fourth-eighth grade students to

address the classroom time lost to COVID-19 and prevent students' loss of knowledge due to summer slide. Carmen was able to offer the National Summer School Initiative (NSSI) program to current and incoming Carmen families as well as students from across various Milwaukee schools. Carmen hired teachers within our organization and also four current Milwaukee Public Schools teachers. The five week summer schedule (June 29 - July 31) provided literacy and math instruction daily with additional enrichment in science and movement-based activities such as yoga. The Literacy curriculum this summer was very intentional, aligning with current events around diversity, equity, inclusion and race. Aside from fostering their academic growth through the summer, the program also provided them with a virtual community where they felt heard, valued, connected, and successful, and where curiosity and joy was fostered. Teachers also received increased training and support around standards aligned distance teaching.

<b>Summer School Family and Teacher Survey Results</b>	
<b>Family Results</b>	
90% were satisfied with their child's experience in the summer program run by the National Summer School Initiative.	
80% shared that their child improved his or her math skills as a result of summer school.	
80% shared that their child improved his or her reading skills as a result of summer school.	
80% shared that NSSI improved their perceptions of virtual learning.	
<b>Student Results</b>	
82% said the teaching in summer school was strong	
86% said their teachers gave them good feedback that helped them to improve their work	
84% said that the energy in their online classroom was positive	

<b>Summer School Family and Teacher Survey Results</b>	
<b>Teacher Results</b>	
92% said that participation in the NSSI will help them to be a better teacher in the 20-21 school year because of teaching NSS	
92% said they were happy with their decision to teach summer school through NSSI	
90% said the curriculum and lesson materials provided by NSSI were strong	
86% said that the daily lesson videos and lesson flow documents provided by the mentor teacher were strong	
88% said they enjoyed working in partnership with their mentor teacher	

88% indicated that they did gain knowledge from their mentor teacher
84% said the daily intellectual prep PD has made them a stronger teacher

Teachers, students and families benefited through their involvement with the NSSI, which ultimately translated to long-term positive impact for students in the new school year. Much of the learnings and challenges translated directly to Carmen's fall reopening plans.

## Financial Performance

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

Carmen's financial audits have consistently demonstrated strong financial performance. At the end of FY19, Carmen's balance sheet showed net assets of \$12.49M which reflects an increase of \$3.34M from the prior year.

Carmen's net asset growth is driven by two strategic objectives:

1. Maintaining adequate working capital to cover operational expenses in the event of a delay in receipt of payment or interruption in cash flow, and,
2. Funding current and future organizational growth. Cash and investments are currently earmarked to fund three months of working capital, facilities projects and capital investments, operational expenses associated with planned future growth, and to meet the expectations of donor-restricted funds that are designated for specific programmatic initiatives.

At the individual school level, each Carmen MPS school has demonstrated the ability to be self-sufficient on per pupil funds. All schools operated with positive cash flow in FY19 with the exception of South Middle School, which was in its first year of operations. While expenses increased significantly in FY20, largely due to planned increases in staffing and additional investment in curriculum and other student supports, all schools are expected to show a positive net income on the forthcoming FY20 audit. Carmen will work to maintain a surplus each beyond our budgeted contingency funds, which will ensure adequate reserves for economic uncertainty.

## 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.

**Organizational Structure.** Carmen High School of Science and Technology, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation established in 2007, which currently oversees five distinct charter schools, including Stellar Elementary School. A Carmen Board of Directors serves as the principal governing and policy-making entity of the nonprofit corporation. The bylaws of the corporation specify that the Board may have no fewer than three and up to 13 voting members and the Chief Executive Officer,

who is a non-voting member. Carmen maintains an active Board of Directors with 13 current members, three of whom were recruited to join the board by the Chief Executive Officer, Jennifer López who assumed the position in August 2019.

The Governing Board governs the school, holds the school to its mission, ensures its financial viability over time and ensures that the school remains true to the provisions of its charter school contract. The Board of Directors is composed of highly qualified individuals who have demonstrated a passion for advancing educational opportunities for students who have historically been underserved. These individuals possess outstanding leadership skills, representing a diverse field of professions and ethnic backgrounds. The Board has sole authority over approval of budget, hiring and evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer, and acts as a fiscal agent by overseeing the annual fiscal and contract compliance audits conducted by an outside firm.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) oversees and advances all Carmen Schools of Science and Technology schools. The CEO embodies and advocates the mission, vision, and strategic direction of the network of schools. The Chief Executive Officer drives systems, effective execution and accountability for programmatic, operational, and financial results. The CEO manages all external and internal operations, such as working with the Board, investors, media, community partners, government agencies, and the finance and operations of the schools. The CEO oversees all positions in the organization and directly manages the Chief Operating Officer, Chief Schools Officer, Chief College Officer, Partnership Co-Director, Director of Development and Marketing, and Director of Strategy and Development. The Chief Executive Officer is hired by the Board of Directors of Carmen Schools of Science and Technology, Inc.

The Chief Schools Officer (CSO) is responsible for leading Carmen's academic strategy and for the oversight, management and development of school principals and the academic team leaders, as well as planning and aligning network professional development to strategic priorities and academic goals. The CSO regularly reviews data to inform decisions and ensure goals are met.

Principals serve as the executive leaders of the school, and are responsible for the vision, strategy, and overall results of our academic program to ensure that all students are reaching their full potential. Principals set and reinforce a vision of high expectations and high support for every student and purposeful engagement of families. Principals are responsible for the coaching, development and evaluation of their leadership teams.

Principals report to the Chief Schools Officer, who reports to the Chief Executive Officer, who in turn reports to the Carmen Board of Directors. The Board meets bi-monthly to review financial statements, academic progress, and set and review strategic initiatives. Board committees meet regularly and report to the entire Board at each board meeting. Board committees may review board policy and make recommendations for a full board adoption. The Board of Directors sets aside one Annual Meeting for budget approval and to conduct any necessary business. The meeting date, time and location of the regular Annual Meeting is set by the Board of Directors.

**Parent Involvement:** Carmen believes that families are the most important partners, and research shows that family engagement increases student achievement.<sup>3</sup> Carmen makes every effort to ensure that parent voice is considered in the decision making process, including the selection of key school leadership roles.

To that end, Carmen is committed to providing ongoing communication, tools, and experiences to support family involvement in school. When students see their families actively engaged as partners in schools, they are more likely to value learning. In order to best support families to support their children, Carmen engages families in the following ways:

- **Weekly Surveys:** Weekly surveys will be provided in the Fall for at least the first six weeks of school. These surveys will be provided to students, staff and families and serve as pulse checks, to make adjustments to the distance learning model and high level improvements, and celebrate successes.
- **Student Led Conferences:** Advisor teachers hold student-led conferences twice a year to touch base with every parent, and optional conferences are held thereafter for students who are struggling or at risk for retention due to academics or attendance. Carmen averages 95% attendance on regular conference dates annually. If a parent cannot attend on a predetermined conference date, then a separate conference is scheduled.
- **CEO Coffee Meetings:** The Chief Executive Officer meets with parents informally at monthly coffee and at student led conferences each fall and spring to identify strengths and challenges at the school in order to help the school leader and faculty team be proactive in addressing issues of concern of families as they emerge and to celebrate successes.
- **Weekly Live Zoom/Facebook Live events with families**
- **Weekly Communication from Chief Executive Officer**
- **Weekly Communication from Schools Principals Family Orientation**
- **Back to School Night**
- **Cafecito with School Principals and School Leadership Teams**
- **College Visits**

**Student Advisories and Family Communication:** Each Carmen student has an advisor, usually a teacher, who guides them through most or all of their middle and high school experience, including monitoring academic performance and community service activities, and supporting the student through the college application process. The advisor meets with advisees daily, and also teaches a curriculum that helps their advisees develop character traits and problem solving and communication skills all students work to develop. Parents often cite the advisory program as among Carmen's greatest strengths, and survey data from school sites indicate that most parents are comfortable contacting their child's advisor.

**Staffing.** Carmen's model includes student to teacher ratios of (approximately 25:1) and a support system of school staff including special education teachers, licensed social workers, deans who oversee culture and discipline, and deans curriculum and instruction who coach teachers and support alignment of curriculum.

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<sup>3</sup> A review of DPI's overview of research on most effective parental involvement practices makes clear the linkage between involved parents and student achievement, especially in reading and math: <http://fscdp.dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/fscdp/pdf/tk-fam-achievemnt.pdf>.

At the Network level, Carmen staff oversee and guide academics, college and career transitions, provide operational support including human resources, admissions, fundraising and other activities. Network support enables principals and their school leaders to maintain students and achievement as their primary focus.

Attracting, hiring and retaining staff and leadership with a high degree of cultural responsiveness aligns with Carmen's organizational focus on Culture, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The first phase of Carmen's plan aims to increase the number of teachers of color by attracting young people (especially Carmen alumni) while the recruitment phase of the plan outlines strategies to remove hiring barriers for potential teachers of color. The plan both removes hiring roadblocks and proactively identifies some of the key challenges typically identified by new teachers during their first years in a Carmen classroom.

By fully supporting new teachers and continuing to develop cultural responsiveness in Carmen peers, Carmen experienced the highest retention rate for teachers of color in SY19-20. Carmen was able to secure funds to help support the recruitment, selection and retention of staff of color. Carmen is on a path to achieving the long-term goal that at least 50% of teaching staff are teachers of color. Since all Carmen schools are located in Milwaukee, increasing the number of teachers of color at Carmen will translate to a greater number of black and brown teachers in Milwaukee, which is the ultimate goal.

**Health and safety.** Ensuring a safe and healthy school environment is essential to providing an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Where Carmen schools are located in MPS buildings, MPS provides building maintenance services. Carmen supplements the work of MPS with cosmetic and other approved building improvements.

School Social Workers (SSWs) are employed at all campuses to provide support on social-emotional matters, including support for families of Carmen students, and they liaise with local health organizations such as the Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers, Saint As, Advocate Aurora, Wisconsin Vision, Milwaukee Health Services and other neighborhood resources to attend parent conference days or provide access to free or very reduced cost support for dental, vision, and hearing services for students who need them.

Physical safety is a top priority. In 2018, Carmen embarked on a Network-wide initiative to ensure an advanced level of safety and emergency training and processes for students and staff (ALICE<sup>4</sup> training for active shooter situations as well as for more routine emergencies), and worked to ensure comprehensive communication structures with families related to emergency situations. Carmen partnered with MPS safety personnel and site staff to manage the differences in approach and communication related to emergency drills in shared buildings, and attempted to share training for no cost to our building partners, although that was ultimately not viable due to district concerns.

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<sup>4</sup> "ALICE" is an acronym for Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate. It's not designed to be sequential but rather to be utilized dynamically in each unique situation. See <https://www.alicetraining.com/our-program/alice-training> for more information.

**School enrollment information.** Enrollment data is an indicator that families value Carmen’s culture and academic approaches. During the 2020 enrollment period, admissions staff met virtually with families, instead of hosting more traditional school visits and tours.

School	Re-Enrollment Percentage	Number on Waitlist
Northwest Middle School	86%	29
Northwest High School	74%	109
South High School	76%	331
Southeast High School	95%	264
South Middle School	78%	1 (expansion year)
Stellar Elementary	94%	8 (expansion year)
<b>742</b> total students on waitlist as of 7.22.2020		

**Discipline guidelines.** Carmen staff seek to approach discipline issues from the position of taking actions to restore the Community Trust. Actions such as peer or teacher/student mediation and/or parent conferences are designed to encourage students to own responsibility for their actions and repair harm to resolve situations. In 2020-2021, Carmen leaders will work strategically with parents, students and staff to create a wider array of restorative justice guidelines and practices.

Suspensions are already very low at Carmen schools (see section 2b above), and staff attempt to eliminate all need for suspensions or referrals to the Districts’ Student Services office for extreme incidents by helping students anticipate consequences for their actions and manage their emotions (with Valor circles and other Social-emotional learning). Unfortunately, some actions do require a referral, and when that happens, staff follow district guidelines.

**School facilities.** Carmen operates three schools in buildings leased from MPS. Two are in former MPS middle schools and one is in an MPS high school facility. Carmen South has shared space with ALBA, an MPS instrumentality charter school, for 12 years in the Walker Complex. Carmen Southeast shares a facility with Pulaski High School. In the shared facilities, a facilities committee consisting of members of each school’s leadership team and the building engineer addresses issues that arise around the use of shared spaces (e.g., cafeteria, auditorium, gyms) and any other matters relevant to day to day operations and scheduling of events.

Carmen Northwest is in its sixth year of operation at the former Northwest Secondary School and does not share the facility with another school. In all of the buildings it leases, Carmen is responsible for the costs of any aesthetic improvements to the building and MPS is responsible for any major repairs to the facility. Carmen intends to continue operating its schools in these three leased facilities during the term of the new charter contract.



**Community partnerships.** Carmen depends on a wide-range and depth of community partnerships to provide insight and feedback, opportunities for students to learn and work, services for students and their families, and financial support to meet the mission. Starting with the members on the Carmen Board of Directors, representatives from a number of local companies such as Baird and Tri City National Bank support Carmen’s CEO and central leadership team with strategic planning and creative problem solving around growth, budgeting, staffing, and other business matters. Individuals from institutions of higher education such as University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Marquette University, and Alverno College partner to provide training for staff, thinking around curriculum and student culture. They also support each high school’s College Transition Coordinators to help students earn scholarships and admittance to college. Partnerships with Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC) provide dual enrollment opportunities for high school students and some Northwest families.

Carmen partners with both Advocate Aurora Health and Froedtert Hospital to provide CNA and medical training opportunities. In 2019-2020, twenty-six local organizations provided student scholarships and/or placements for the Student Internship Program (SIP), and others provided opportunities for job shadowing and personal interviews with all freshmen at each campus. Carmen students serve 10-20 hours of community service each year with organizations such as the Urban Ecology Center, The Garden District Neighborhood Association, Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee, Mexican Fiesta and many others.

Each school maintains different connections to provide cultural activities and learning that augment academic coursework. For example, Northwest students dance at Phenomenal Dance Company and have provided a site for the Milwaukee Rep’s August Wilson Monologues competition. Each campus also partners with nearby organizations to help families find resources they need related to physical and mental health, employment, housing, and after school care. For instance, Silver Spring Neighborhood Center provides after school programs and St. A provides at-school counselling for Northwest students, and youth Middle students partner with the nearby YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee for after-school care. All families at Carmen South, Southeast and South Middle receive information and health screening opportunities from the Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers.

Local partners such as El Rey and Pete’s Fruit Market employ a number of Carmen students, and the Network team coordinated a partnership that allowed Carmen families affected by COVID to buy groceries for their families from the Carmen Emergency Relief Fund. Perhaps most importantly, many of the local businesses and community-based organizations that provide voice and choice for families in the neighborhoods near Carmen schools have graciously hosted staff visits and engaged in conversations to foster understanding about the many assets the neighborhoods and Carmen families have, which is a crucial component to culturally responsive teaching. All members of Carmen staff are highly encouraged to participate in a full range of community-based organizations that promote justice and the voices of Carmen students and families.

**Pulaski-Carmen Partnership.** This school partnership continues to evolve, while remaining true to its stated goal of “Two great schools in one building.” Student interaction has been positive. Pulaski-Carmen athletics has increased in numbers and strength, in part due to intentionally



selecting staff members from both schools to coach as frequently as possible and an increase in student-to-student recruitment as relationships are built.

During the 2018-2019 school year, small focus groups of students said they would like to participate together in more career-focused activities, social activities, and a Campus Student Government. This feedback led to a joint teachers collaborative funded by a grant from Northwestern Mutual to Carmen that provided teacher stipends for participating Pulaski and Carmen teachers in 2019-2020 to support student work to create structures for forming a Campus Student Government. The new organization had just selected its first slate of officers when schools were closed due to COVID-19. The fledgling organization was responsible for instituting weekly announcements for events and information that applied to both schools and was beginning to plan joint social activities such as a campus spirit week and homecoming dance for fall. When site-based classes resume, the Campus Student Government will lead efforts to enact campus-wide policies and processes that amplify student voice and address common student concerns.

The core educational programs at each school are different. Pulaski staff are working toward full IB programming to become fully certified as an IB school, while Carmen is STEM-focused with a large AP-related curriculum. Electives at both schools are fully-enrolled, which allows little room for cross-school sharing, although different efforts are made each year to allow Pulaski students to take AP courses at Carmen and Carmen students to take automotive courses at Pulaski, for example. Although shared course offerings have not been very useful to either schools' program, staff from Carmen and Pulaski have worked together successfully with the MPS Office of Contract Compliance Services to host trainings for over 60 students from both schools to take advantage of internship opportunities. In summer 2019, four summer interns (two from each school) worked as a team for several months to support staff across both schools, and a number of students from both schools have participated in wage-paying learning experiences, including a small, shared carpentry class offered by Carmen during intersession in January 2020.

Since the Pulaski Complex comprises two high schools with a stated intention to partner rather than co-locate, monthly Pulaski Campus Building Council meetings and bi-weekly Principals' Meetings address more than facilities-related issues; they also address campus culture, collaboration between leadership teams and other staff, and shared student activities, as needed. Care is given to ensure that each decision supports the individual program at each school, and that common decision-making does not consistently privilege one school over the other. The Pulaski Campus Building Council, as well as leadership at both schools with support from the partnership co-director, work hard to leverage the benefits of sharing a building and minimize the challenges for both schools. Two joint groups of teachers from each school met regularly throughout 2019-2020. First, the New Teachers Collaborative, which included advisory support from a Pulaski Assistant Principal (AP) and Carmen Director of Curriculum and Instruction (DoCI), met to practice consultancies around some of their dilemmas associated with being a new teacher and developed a series of recommendations for new teacher on-boarding and ongoing collaboration at both schools. Second, the Campus Teacher Collaborative of experienced teachers from both schools worked to institute the Campus Student Government and a shared communications for students structure that can survive student and staff turnover.

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

**Culture and Climate Survey:** During the 2019-2020, Carmen conducted a Culture and Climate survey, through the guidance of Derute Consulting Cooperative, to learn more about high school students' and all Carmen families' perceptions of the environment at each Carmen school.

High school student respondents:

- 88% agree their school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn
- 94% agree their school sets high standards for academic performance for all students
- 90% agree their school promotes academic success for all students
- 80% agree their racial and cultural identity is recognized and celebrated at school

Carmen learned areas of improvement to address students' perceptions including:

- Only 65% of students believe most adults really care about every student
- 35% believe only some adults really care about every student
- 46% of students do not believe school rules are fair
- 24% of students do not believe they can easily raise and communicate concerns about issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion

Families scored similarly high on their perception of our K-12 school environments:

- 94% agree that Carmen is a supportive and inviting place for learning
- 94% agree that Carmen is welcoming to all families
- 90% agree that Carmen is a safe place for students
- 94% agree that Carmen staff are comfortable being in the homes, communities, and neighborhoods of their students

Carmen's Spanish-speaking family respondents reported:

- 100% agree that Carmen fosters a respect for students' racial and ethnic differences
- 100% agree that Carmen fosters a respect for students' language differences
- 100% agree that the school is welcoming to all families

Carmen learned areas of improvement to address families' perceptions including:

- 88% of families want to be more engaged in their school
- Around 70% of families perceive varying levels of prestige and access to resources amongst the campuses.

Through surveys and town halls, Carmen will learn more details of students' and families' perceptions and concerns to address them and cultivate a stronger experience and perception for all Carmen families.

According to Derute Consulting Cooperative, "The results of the Culture and Climate survey and Needs Assessment indicated positive perceptions of the school culture and climate overall across stakeholder groups."

**Student Mobility:** Carmen maintains one of the lowest mobility rates in the city with less than 3% of students and families leaving Carmen during the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018-2019 school year. This serves as a strong indicator of students and parents satisfaction.

Additionally, attendance at Carmen averages over 94% every year, with Carmen South Middle School average 98% attendance rates since its founding year. All of the statistics included far outpace the district. The full results of our attendance rates, mobility rates, and stability rates can be found in Appendix (PARR)

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

Carmen High School of Science and Technology, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation established in 2007, which currently oversees five distinct charter schools. A Carmen Board of Directors serves as the principal governing and policy-making entity of the nonprofit corporation. The bylaws of the corporation specify that the Board may have no fewer than three and up to 13 voting members and the Chief Executive Officer, who is a non-voting member. Carmen maintains an active Board of Directors with 13 current members, three of which were recruited to join the board by the Chief Executive Officer, Jennifer López who assumed the position in August 2019.

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The Chief Schools Officer (CSO) is responsible for leading Carmen's academic strategy and for the oversight, management and development of school principals and the academic team leaders, as well as planning and aligning network professional development to strategic priorities and academic goals. The CSO regularly reviews data to inform decisions and ensure goals are met. (Please see Appendix F for the resume of Melissa McGonnegle, the CSO.)

Principals serve as the executive leaders of the school, and are responsible for the vision, strategy, and overall results of the academic program to ensure that all students are reaching their full potential. Principals set and reinforce a vision of high expectations and high support for every

student and purposeful engagement of families. Principals are responsible for the coaching, development and evaluation of their leadership teams.

## II. Plans for Continued Success

### Educational 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).**

Carmen Schools is not proposing any substantive changes to the original middle and high school educational programs as summarized above in Section I.A.1.

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

#### Enrollment projections by grade

Grade	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
6th	236	217	212	220	246
7th	167	230	218	212	220
8th	163	167	226	219	213
9th	581	507	485	512	525
10th	445	507	448	425	446
11th	374	416	475	424	401
12th	351	360	396	450	412
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>2317</b>	<b>2404</b>	<b>2460</b>	<b>2462</b>	<b>2463</b>

#### Enrollment projections by campus

Campus	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
Northwest	864	887	900	900	900
South Middle	275	329	360	362	363
South	378	398	400	400	400
Southeast	800	800	800	800	800

<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>2317</b>	<b>2404</b>	<b>2460</b>	<b>2462</b>	<b>2463</b>
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**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.**

Carmen expects to be held accountable to similar goals and measurable objectives contained in the initial charter contract. Carmen’s strong school results continue to exceed the results of schools in the city across all sectors: traditional public, public charter and private voucher schools.

Carmen intends to meet these goals by continuously looking at qualitative and quantitative data from various critical stakeholders to drive decisions in fulfilling the promise made to families in preparing their children for success in college, careers, community and life.

School leadership team engage in a strategic planning process annually, informed by the previous years outcomes on a variety of quantitative and qualitative metrics including student achievement results from MAP, Forward, ACT Aspire, ACCESS, ACT, AP pass rates, AP participation, benchmarks, student support data (interventions, attendance, suspensions etc.), enrollment and stability data, student and family surveys, employee engagement surveys, DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) survey data from staff and families, staff retention data and exit surveys in addition to anecdotal evidence across the year. Leadership then engages both staff and families in a SWOT analysis of current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to supporting Carmen vision and proposed outcomes. This process is facilitated to be both transparent and focused on the highest leverage areas to impact student outcomes overall.

These focus areas are translated into a few Wildly Important Goals (WIGs), and the leadership team works to build out accompanying lead measures (i.e. smaller goals that can be influenced daily, weekly, or monthly in order to achieve the Wildly Important Goals.) All of this rolls up into a dashboard that tracks progress against goals and is shared in regular communication updates to families and students, staff, the Carmen network, and the governing board regularly to track progress against these goals. Each school within the Carmen network sets five WIGs from each of the pillars that make for a strong school: Achievement, Equity, Culture, Talent, and Family Engagement.

**Data Drives All Decisions:** To ensure Carmen is on track to achieving ambitious academic and social outcomes for all students, students are formally assessed throughout the year and measure progress towards standard mastery in addition to more frequent formative and informal assessments.

All data is used by teachers to identify specific learning gaps, create strategic groupings of students for interventions, and provide updates to families on the progress of their children. Data is collected and used to continually improve family satisfaction with their child’s academic achievement and school experience, teacher satisfaction and development, and operational efficiency.

Carmen utilizes data to communicate timely data to relevant stakeholders, identify gaps or areas for acceleration and create a plan, train students to own their goals, and reassess to monitor and communicate progress. Carmen adopted a new educational software that provides our teachers the ability to provide daily exit tickets aligned to grade level standards. These exit tickets measure student mastery of the content in that given day.

## **Financial Performance**

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

Carmen's Board of Directors measures financial performance against three goals:

- 1) Safety Net, or the maintenance of a working capital reserve;
- 2) Sustainability, or the ability of the organization to meet its budget goals with minimal reliance on philanthropy; and,
- 3) Sufficiency, or the adequacy of funding to fulfill the agency's mission and outcome goals.

Carmen has worked hard to put the agency on solid footing with respect to the first two goals. Carmen currently maintains a working capital reserve sufficient to support the organization for over three months and has operated almost exclusively on public funds (98.7% of Carmen's FY19 funds came from public sources). Looking to the future, Carmen's primary goal is to ensure the sufficiency of funds, while continuing to meet the first two objectives. With an uncertain budget future due to the current economic crisis, Carmen will be closely monitoring our financial commitments to ensure that our track record of financial performance continues. Distance learning not only brings unique costs but will ultimately also require additional investments to ensure students are equipped for college by the time they graduate.

While the Cares Act and other COVID-specific funding sources will help fund the immediate needs for increased technology and PPE, in the absence of ongoing per pupil funding increase, Carmen will need to carefully manage resources to ensure that funds are adequate to meet needs. Carmen has historically succeeded in this objective, making adjustments to our commitments and seeking additional support when needed, and will continue to do so in order to ensure the organization's ongoing vitality.

## **Organizational Performance**

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

Carmen believes that families are the most important partners, and research shows that family engagement increases student achievement.<sup>5</sup> Carmen makes every effort to ensure that parent

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<sup>5</sup> A review of DPI's overview of research on most effective parental involvement practices makes clear the linkage between involved parents and student achievement, especially in reading and math: <http://fscpi.dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/fscpi/pdf/tk-fam-achievemnt.pdf>

voice is considered in the decision making process, including the selection of key school leadership roles.

To that end, Carmen is committed to providing ongoing communication, tools, and experiences to support family involvement in school. When students see their families actively engaged as partners in schools, they are more likely to value learning. In order to best support families to support their children, Carmen engages families in the following ways:

- **Weekly Surveys:** Weekly surveys will be provided in the Fall for at least the first six weeks of school. These surveys will be provided to students, staff and families and serve as pulse checks, to make adjustments to the distance learning model and high level improvements, and celebrate successes.
- **Student Led Conferences:** Advisor teachers hold student-led conferences twice a year to touch base with every parent, and optional conferences are held thereafter for students who are struggling or at risk for retention due to academics or attendance. Carmen averages 95% attendance on regular conference dates annually. If a parent cannot attend on a predetermined conference date, then a separate conference is scheduled.
- **CEO Coffee Meetings:** The Chief Executive Officer meets with parents informally at monthly coffee and at student led conferences each fall and spring to identify strengths and challenges at the school in order to help the school leader and faculty team be proactive in addressing issues of concern of families as they emerge and to celebrate successes.
- **Weekly Live Zoom/Facebook Live events with families**
- **Weekly Communication from Chief Executive Officer**
- **Weekly Communication from Schools Principals Family Orientation**
- **Back to School Night**
- **Cafecito with School Principals and School Leadership Teams**
- **College Visits**

**Student Advisories and Family Communication:** Each Carmen student has an advisor, usually a teacher, who guides them through most or all of their middle and high school experience, including monitoring academic performance and community service activities, and supporting the student through the college application process. The advisor meets with advisees daily, and also teaches a curriculum that helps their advisees develop character traits and problem solving and communication skills all students work to develop. Parents often cite the advisory program as among Carmen's greatest strengths, and survey data from school sites indicate that most parents are comfortable contacting their child's advisor.

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

There are no proposed changes to the current school governance structure. There are currently thirteen members on the Carmen Board of Directors, and this number is expected to remain unchanged.