



<b>MPS CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACT RECOMMENDATION</b>	
<b>CHARTER SCHOOL</b>	Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy (MESA)
<b>MISSION</b>	MESA is dedicated to creating a safe, nurturing, and rigorous learning environment that supports the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth of all its scholars. Emphasis is placed on engaging scholars in active learning, real-world problem-solving, and decision-making, with a focus on environmental stewardship and community involvement.
<b>VISION</b>	MESA scholars are propelled to soar academically while demonstrating habits of scholarship that build strong character as they navigate towards college and career readiness with the support of professional lifelong learners.
<b>YEAR OPENED</b>	2013
<b>DATE OF SITE VISIT</b>	October 29, 2024

The renewal recommendation is based on a thorough review and analysis of information and data from the following and summarized in this document: Charter School Performance Summary, Application for Renewal, and school site visit.

<b>CHARTER SCHOOL REVIEW TEAM RENEWAL RECOMMENDATION</b>	
<b>Renewal Terms</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
<p><b>Full-term Renewal</b> Term of five years</p>	<p>To be eligible, schools must be in the last year of the contract term and have achieved the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a strong and compelling record of evidence that the school met the performance standards in the areas of Academic Performance, Financial Performance, and Organizational Performance.</li> </ul> <p><u>Guidelines for Recommending Five-Year Renewal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Team determines that a school primarily merits <i>Met the Standard</i> ratings in the performance areas.</li> <li>A school that receives mixed ratings may be recommended for a full five-year renewal term if sufficient additional evidence obtained from the school's Application for Renewal and School Site Visit make this a credible recommendation.</li> </ul>

X	<b>Short-term Renewal</b> Term of three years	<p>To be eligible, schools must be in the last year of the contract term and have achieved the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a strong and compelling record of evidence that the school met a considerable number of the performance standards (approaches the standards) in the areas of Academic Performance, Financial Performance, and Organizational Performance and/or shows continuous, meaningful improvement toward meeting the performance standards.</li> </ul> <p><u>Guidelines for Recommending Three-Year Renewal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Team determines that a school primarily merits <i>Met the Standard</i> or <i>Approaching the Standard</i> ratings or demonstrates continuous and meaningful improvement in the performance areas.</li> <li>A school that receives mixed ratings may be recommended for a three-year renewal term if evidence obtained from the school's Application for Renewal and School Site Visit make this a credible recommendation.</li> </ul>
	<b>Non-Renewal / Revocation</b>	<p>To be considered for non-renewal or revocation, the school does not apply for renewal or the school's academic, financial, and/or organizational performance results do not meet the standards and are deemed unsatisfactory. This would result in a recommendation for non-renewal/revocation.</p> <p><u>Guidelines for Recommending Non-Renewal / Revocation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School receives a <i>Did Not Meet the Standard</i> in all three areas of performance.</li> <li>A school that receives mixed ratings may be recommended for non-renewal/ renovation if evidence obtained from the school's Performance Summary, Application for Renewal, and School Site Visit make this a credible recommendation.</li> </ul>

CHARTER SCHOOL PRELIMINARY PERFORMANCE SUMMARY			
	Met the Standard (At least 75%)	Approaches the Standard (Between 50%-74%)	Did Not Meet the Standard (Below 50%)
Academic Performance			X
Financial Standard	X		
Organizational Standard	X		

## CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL

Met the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
<p>The Application for Renewal provides clear, concise and compelling information in the areas of Academic, Financial and Organizational Performance. The school has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Included ample evidence of increased student achievement or shown continuous improvement;</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provided credible examples and documented evidence of its financial performance; and</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrated sufficiently and convincingly that it is organizationally sound.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The school's plans for continued success are clearly and effectively outlined with full details, descriptions, and explanations.</li> </ul>	<p>The Application for Renewal provides information in the areas of Academic, Financial and Organizational Performance. The information provided does not fully meet the expectations of the standard. Some of the information provided is developing and there is evidence of growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provided some evidence of increased student achievement or continuous improvement;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provided some evidence of its financial performance; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provided some evidence that it is organizationally sound.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The school's plans for continued success were partially developed and did not provide sufficient evidence to support the plan's for success.</li> </ul>	<p>The Application for Renewal does not provide clear, concise and compelling information in the areas of Academic, Financial and Organizational Performance. The school did not satisfactorily address application components. Responses lack details. Descriptions and/or examples are underdeveloped. The school provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient evidence of increased student achievement or continuous improvement;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Unclear examples and evidence of its financial performance; and</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate evidence that it is organizationally sound.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The school's plans for continued success are unclear and not fully described or developed.</li> </ul>

## CHARTER SCHOOL SITE VISIT

Met the Standard	Approaches the Standard	Did Not Meet the Standard
<p>Charter school site visit provided excellent further evidence that the school is meeting performance standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School presentations clearly and effectively communicated information from its Application for Renewal.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School sufficiently addressed any issues/concerns raised by the MPS Charter School Contract Review Team members.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School (if appropriate) provided sufficient supplementary information to further clarify performance results and ratings.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Samples of student work and classroom visits reflect strongly and positively the school's</li> </ul>	<p>Charter school site visit provided some evidence that the school is meeting some of the performance standards. The information provided does not fully meet the expectations of the standard. Some of the information provided is developing and the school demonstrated evidence of growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School presentation partially communicated information from its Application for Renewal.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School addressed some of the issues/concerns raised by the MPS Charter School Contract Review Team members.</li> </ul>	<p>Charter school site visit did not provide compelling evidence that the school is meeting performance standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School presentation insufficiently communicated information from its Application for Renewal.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School did not adequately address issues/concerns raised by the MPS Charter School Contract Review Team members.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> School did not provide ample supplementary information to clarify performance results and</li> </ul>

teaching and learning practices.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School provided some supplementary information to clarify performance results and ratings. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Samples of student work and classroom visits provided some information to support the school's teaching and learning practices.	ratings. <input type="checkbox"/> Samples of student work and classroom visits did not necessarily positively reflect the school's teaching and learning practices.
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**SUMMARY COMMENTS**

MESA's mission is to create a safe, nurturing, and rigorous learning environment that supports the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional growth of all its scholars. Emphasis is placed on engaging scholars in active learning, real-world problem-solving, and decision-making, with a focus on environmental stewardship and community involvement.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the evidence provided in the Charter School Application for Renewal; Preliminary Performance Summary; Site Visit, which included classroom visits, testimony from students and parents; along with additional information from the school team, the Charter School Review Team recommends a short-term charter school contract renewal.

MESA utilizes Expeditionary Learning (EL) an evidence-based framework to support student learning. With consistent staffing, ongoing data analysis through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), continued emphasis on science education, and full implementation of EL, the review team recognized the potential for positive student outcomes.

The Review Team indicated that the climate and culture is conducive for learning, which is contributed to the implementation of the Habits of Scholarship and Crew. The opportunity for science integration and expedition is evident in the community garden and throughout the school. The school was recognized at the National EL Education Convention for this work with students presenting the Community Garden. Parents spoke highly of MESA's programming and appreciated the safe space and environmental focus for learning.

MESA has a strong board of directors who are invested in the school and provide resources and time to help foster its growth. MESA's challenge is recruiting and retaining its staff to ensure proper training in the EL model. MESA's teachers receive ongoing coaching, professional learning, and support from EL Education director, Urban Learning Collaborative (ULC), and internal coaches.

**ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

MESA uses data to inform instruction. They recognized the need for reading growth and as a result partnered with Reading Corp to provide reading interventions and support to students. Based off of data analysis, they recently adopted a new math curriculum. The ongoing teacher support for reading and math instruction is provided through coaching and professional learning.

MESA's focus on the implementation of the EL curriculum continues to develop. The expeditionary learning is project based with small groups to create active student engagement through collaboration. MESA's leadership and coaching staff has strategically worked with teachers in planning and preparation to reach full implementation of EL. The instructional coaches are focusing on primary grades, specific to the Science of Reading, and the intermediate and middle school grades are creating more opportunities for science integration into the lessons.

### **FINANCIAL STANDARDS**

MESA has continuously met all of its financial performance standards. The school has complied with all accounting and submission of records and reporting as outlined in its contract.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS**

The school has met all of its organizational performance standards.

### **SCHOOL SITE VISIT**

MESA's presentation provided information to support the different components of the educational program and highlighted some key areas of success. The school team showcased the Better World Day, an initiative through EL that the school community chose. Due to the work through this project, MESA was selected for EL Education's annual Better World Day and the Garden Club will be showcased and recognized at the National Conference.

The school team was able to share the work that is promoted through the Habits of Scholarship. Teachers infuse the Habits of Scholarship into daily instruction which is aligned with Crew. Crew is a strategy used to develop positive relationships as well as support students and adults socially, emotionally, and academically. The structure of Crew allows for relationship building, academic progress monitoring, and character development.

Students presented information to support the science fair projects that occur annually. MESA increased grade level participation to include grades 2 through 8 which allowed more students to showcase their learning throughout the year.

### **CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

Through classroom observations, the Charter Review Team was looking for evidence of Habits of Scholarship, Crew, and components of environmental sciences using the EL model. The Team noted Crew and Habits of Scholarship were evident in the classrooms. The Team recognizes there is work to do to strengthen Tier 1 instruction aligning to the EL framework. It was recommended that the school leverage a component of EL that can be implemented schoolwide and have a strong impact on student outcomes.

### **STUDENT FOCUS GROUP**

Students appreciate Crew and how it helps to provide a safe environment. Crew is a fun way to prepare for the day and build confidence. The Habits of Scholarship teach students integrity, to treat others nicely, be respectful to adults, and do the right thing. When asked what MESA could improve on, several students mentioned that they need more sports, arts, and science clubs. All students spoke highly of the Better World Day and appreciated an opportunity to help people in the

garden and community.

**PARENT FOCUS GROUP**

Parents appreciate that the school is a small, family-orientated, safe, and welcoming environment. Parents are invested in MESA as evidenced by the longevity of families. Parents are grateful for the many ways that MESA communicates.

Parents noted that they would like to see an increase in parental involvement. Similar to the students, they would like to see more sports and clubs available. Parents appreciated the before and after school programming prior to the pandemic and would like that to return.

MESA provides an environmental science focus on the near northwest side of Milwaukee for the past eleven years. MESA is student-centered and provides a unique learning option for families.

**MPS CHARTER SCHOOL REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS**

Rebecca Alt	MPS Research, Assessment and Data
Tangela Anderson	MPS Finance
Nate Deans	MPS Director of Black and Latino Male Achievement
Lolita Harden	Community Member
Darryl Jackson	MPS Board of Directors
Henry Leonard	MPS Board of Directors
Marty Lexmond	Community Member
Tracy Wozniak	MPS Specialized Services

SIGNATURE: *Bridget Schock*

DATE: October 29, 2024

Bridget Schock, Director, Contracted School Services