



Transforming Learning...  
through Effective Teaching.

August 10, 2021

Contracted School Services  
Milwaukee Public Schools  
5225 W. Vliet Street, Room 204  
Milwaukee, WI 53208

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy, a MTEC Charter School, it is our intent to renew a 5-year contract with Milwaukee Public Schools.

Serving over 400 students in grades K4 - 8, MESA is currently authorized by Milwaukee Public Schools as a "non-instrumentality" charter school. MTEC works closely with its MESA teachers and community partners in the ongoing development of a Teacher Training Design Center, located at MESA. The Design Center is focused on advancing the goal of providing highly qualified teachers in the Milwaukee area.

We believe that all children **can and want** to learn! Through discovery, inquiry, and critical thinking, we prepare our scholars to become leaders of their own learning. We believe this is accomplished by educators partnering with families each day. Continued authorization by Milwaukee Public Schools allows for constant progress in these efforts.

**Renewal Contact Persons:**

Laci Coppins Robbins, Ed.D., Executive Director  
Milwaukee Teacher Education Center  
6737 W. Washington Street, Suite 1420  
Milwaukee, WI 53214  
414-342-1569  
lcoppinsrobbins@mteconline.org

Janet Colvin, Principal  
Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy  
6600 W Melvina Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53216  
414-353-3830  
jcolvin@mke-es.org

Sincerely,

Laci Coppins Robbins, ED., Executive Director  
Milwaukee Teacher Education Center

Dr. John Peterburs  
Board President

Janet Colvin, Principal  
Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy

**Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy (MESA)  
Charter School Application for Renewal 2021**

**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).**

The goal of the Milwaukee Teacher Education Center (MTEC) is to maintain a high-performing charter school focusing on environmental sciences using the Expeditionary Learning (EL) model. The World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) defines sustainability as “...meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy (MESA), a MTEC Charter School utilizing project-based learning and differentiated instruction, nurtures and ensures that all scholars become ecologically responsible.

The EL Education Model developed in collaboration between Kurt Hahn, the founder of Outward Bound, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education is based on the understanding that high-quality learning is active, challenging, meaningful, public, and collaborative. At MESA, this means that teachers work with scholars to ensure that they are deeply engaged in learning and striving to reach high levels, academically and socially. Scholars gain the necessary skills to be ready for college and/or career readiness through a rigorous curriculum that strives to develop strong literacy and math skills, as well as the ability to think critically, problem-solve, collaborate, and become active citizens within their community.

**EL Education is guided by the following ten design principles:**

1. ***Primacy of Self-Discovery***- Learning happens best with emotion, challenge, and the requisite support. Scholars undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. The teacher's primary task is to help scholars overcome their fears and discover they can do more than they think they can.

2. ***Having Wonderful Ideas*** - This principle fosters curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

3. ***Responsibility for Learning***- Learning is both a personal process of discovery and social activity. Everyone learns both individually and as part of a group. Every aspect of an EL Education school encourages both scholars and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning. Scholars facilitate their Student-Led Conferences twice a year.

4. ***Empathy and Caring*** - During the 2020-2021 school year, teachers infused the Habits of Scholarship into their 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 the crew allows for relationship building, academic progress

monitoring, and character development. Also, a Social Emotional coach provided professional development opportunities to foster empathy and caring into the daily instruction.

In the Spring of 2021, MESA provided in-person learning to 120 scholars. Learning groups were small with a caring adult monitoring the social-emotional progress for virtual and in-person scholars while advocating for their success.

5. ***Success and Failure*** - All scholars need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. It is also important for scholars to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are difficult, and to learn to turn challenges into opportunities.

Through ***Celebrations of Learning***, scholars gain confidence as docents or guides and masters of their learning. They present this content to stakeholders, family members, and community leaders. Scholars will demonstrate their mastery of the oral presentation. They know that making mistakes is part of the learning process and through failure, knowledge is gained.

6. ***Collaboration and Competition***- Individual and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Scholars are encouraged to compete with their personal best and rigorous standards of excellence.

Collaboration is one of the six ***Habits of Scholarship*** supported at MESA. This is demonstrated in each class as teachers and educational assistants work with small groups of scholars to develop their skills. Scholars are encouraged to facilitate and collaborate in small groups while teachers or educational assistants monitor and provide affirmation and feedback. All teachers have scholars' STAR test data available to share and encourage growth.

During virtual learning, scholars participated in school-wide assemblies which highlighted their success, provided incentives, and included shout-outs to support the development of school-wide CREW during times of uncertainty.

Under the guidance of the instructional coach and school psychologist, Professional Development was provided to support phonics intervention groups.

7. ***Diversity and Inclusion***- Diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others. Our scholars investigate and value their different histories and talents and those of other communities and cultures. During the 2020-2021 school year, to meet the needs of all scholars, data continued to drive the creation of learning groups that were heterogeneous and homogeneous. We analyzed the iReady data to create a school-wide focus on phonics and vocabulary.

MESA demonstrates diversity and inclusion by forming partnerships with Northwestern Mutual and City Forward centered around service learning. Additionally, teachers select a wide range of expedition topics, inclusive of different communities and cultures. Therefore, scholars become well-rounded and informed in their understanding, which will deepen their appreciation and respect for others.

8. *The Natural World* - A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles as well as cause and effect. Scholars learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

MESA is located across the street from Dineen Park which is part of the Milwaukee County Parks System. During the 2020-2021 school year, Dineen Park was under construction and unavailable, in the past scholars and adults have partnered with the park in clean-up efforts and learning opportunities. They have had the opportunity to practice “catch and release” fishing during the school day while also analyzing the biodiversity of the pond. MESA will continue to provide scholars with hands-on science opportunities and field experiences once Dineen Park re-opens.

Our understanding of our environment extends outside of our area, and the field experiences are tied to our environmental theme. We have resumed our work with the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center and will work with the Milwaukee County Zoological Society to provide our scholars with offsite outdoor instruction. This complements and enriches classroom instruction. Our field experience, new science curriculum, and outdoor classroom will introduce our scholars to new interconnected concepts to give the “Big Picture” of how we connect to the natural world.

This past Spring, MESA rebuilt the planting beds; two of the gardens were planted with vegetables while two standing gardens were filled with herbs and greens in collaboration with the Master Gardener from the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, a community member from the greek organization Phi Beta Sigma. MESA will continue working to turn the newly restructured courtyard into an outdoor classroom and hope to add more picnic tables to allow for outdoor seating. MESA has come extremely far in the last three years and our environmental connection deepens as more students become exposed to the opportunities we offer.

9. *Solitude and Reflection*- Scholars and teachers need time alone to explore their thoughts, make their connections, and create their ideas. They also need to exchange their reflections with other scholars and with adults.

Through the EL practice of peer critique, scholars provide each other with feedback to enhance their personal development. Additionally, teachers plan multiple opportunities throughout the instructional day for scholars to reflect on their behavioral and academic performance. Finally, the staff serves as critical accountability partners for scholars’ individual growth.

10. *Service and Compassion*- EL Education School’s primary function is to prepare scholars with attitudes and skills for acts of consequential service to others.

### **Instructional Program**

MESA’s educational program is the integration of learning across disciplines in phases which include:

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics). The interdisciplinary program integrates:

- **Science** - Engage scholars in scientific study, inquiry, problem solving, and developing research skills critical for advanced academic studies.
- **Technology** - Provide a gateway into the 21st century by way of literacy through multimedia and global awareness, with standards and skill development embedded.
- **Engineering** - The infusion of math and science.
- **Art** - Develop a greater appreciation of a scholar's individual talents, understanding, and appreciation of the humanities.
- **Mathematics** - Teaching of problem-solving strategies that help scholars see the many applications of their mathematical understandings in the world around them.

The core instructional program includes:

- **Literacy (reading and writing)** - A balanced, integrated approach that focuses on targeted, comprehensive, and meaningful instruction.
- **Social Studies** - Equip students with information and skills necessary to become productive citizens in a democratic society.
- **Physical Education** - Through contemporary sports students develop and maintain healthy bodies and lifestyles.

Researched based strategies are utilized for academic achievement at MESA include but not limited to:

- **Expeditionary Learning/Project-Based Learning:** Filled with active and engaged experiences exploring real-world problems and challenges inspires scholars to obtain a deeper knowledge of the subjects they are studying. Research indicates that students are more likely to retain the knowledge gained through these approaches far more readily than through traditional textbook-centered learning. In addition, students develop confidence and self-direction as they move through both team-based and independent work across disciplines.
- **Year-Round Education (YRE)** with an extended school day: A year-round calendar coincides more effectively with the four growing seasons needed for the environmental focus of the school. In addition, it provides a more consistent calendar conducive to learning and retention. There is some research that contends that year-round schools can have more positive effects on students who are deemed at risk for academic problems such as children from low-income families or other students who might typically be low performers in school (Cooper, et al., 2003). In addition, an extended school day provides the necessary time to incorporate a rich fine arts program into the curriculum.
- **Accelerated Curriculum:** The Accelerated Schools Model developed by Dr. Henry Levin at Stanford University is committed to the premise that every child should be treated as gifted and will achieve when supported in a learning environment with high expectations. Schools incorporate the efforts of parents/guardians and schools together, co-leading governance and decision-making functions to create a curriculum and an atmosphere in which accelerated learning is fostered.

- **Differentiated Instruction:** Teachers tailor their teaching approach to match their scholars' learning styles. We have the same learning expectations for all our scholars. Instead of using a one-size-fits-all approach, teachers use a variety of methods and best practices to teach. This may include teaching our scholars in small groups or in one-on-one sessions.
- **Extended Day -** MESA offers Before and After School Programming serving school-age children ages 4-13. The program is led by qualified, caring staff. The YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee's licensed Before and After School Program is designed to complement the school day, with activities that support character development aligned with Crew.
- **Social-Emotional Learning -** Social-emotional learning (SEL) is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are vital scholar academic success as well as life success. Scholars with strong social-emotional skills are better able to cope with everyday challenges and benefit academically and socially.
- **Mindfulness and Movement -** The program is designed to help scholars address the challenges in their lives and reach their full potential by providing them with strategies to improve focus, concentration, self-confidence, self-regulation, and interpersonal communication; additionally, teach scholars skills for peaceful conflict resolution, anger management, and stress reduction.
- **Response to Intervention RtI:** Response to Intervention (RtI) is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of scholars with learning and behavior needs. The RtI process begins universal screening of children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at varying levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. Progress is closely monitored to assess the learning rate and level of student performance. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual scholars' responses to instruction.

**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.**

According to the 2018-2019, Wisconsin Department Public Instruction District Report Card, MESA achieved an *Exceeds Expectations* rating with an overall score of 76.2.

**Pupil Academic Achievement Report (PAAR)**

	MESA	MPS	Met Goal	MESA	MPS	Met Goal
<b>Years</b>	2018-2019	2018-2019		2019-2020	2019-2020	
<b>Attendance</b>	91.6%	90.2%	Yes	90.2%	90.9%	No
<b>Mobility</b>	7.9%	9.8%	Yes	6.4%	8.8%	Yes

The Pupil Academic Achievement Report above chart reflects the attendance and mobility rate results of MESA and the district for 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years. The MESA attendance rate of 91.6% is 1.4% greater than the district, which is 90.2% in 2018-2019. Additionally, the MESA mobility rate for both school years was 7.9% and 6.4% respectively. This is a 1.9% and 2.4% lower mobility rate than the district. The table demonstrates MESA's ability to increase attendance and decrease student mobility. Please note: All federal and state requirements to administer academic assessments were suspended for 2019-2020 as a result of the ESEA waiver granted by the Department of Education on March 23 and the Wisconsin Act 185 enacted on April 25.

In a September 10, 2021, letter from Expeditionary Learning Education it was stated that MESA "experienced significant progress and continues progress towards an upward trend in its Implementation Review (IR) score. MESA increased from a score of 90 in the 2018-19 school year to a score of 108 in the 2019-20 school year which exceeds the benchmark by ten points. Due to COVID and extraordinary circumstances in 2020-21, MESA was able to opt-out of the Implementation Review (See letter Appendix A).

According to Renaissance STAR Reading Assessment, our second graders' scores increased by 3% in the significantly above category from fall to spring. Sixth-grade scores increased by 1%, seventh grade increased by 5%, eighth grade increased by 6%, and fourth grade remained the same at 3%. There was a slight decline of 1%-5% in grades first, third and fifth.

According to STAR Math Assessment, our first-graders increased by 24% in the at/above category from fall to spring and our eighth graders increased by 11%. Sixth and seventh-grade percentages remained the same at 4% for sixth grade and 5% for seventh grade. Grades second, third, fourth, and fifth declined by 3%-8%.

An investigation of the practices of instructional staff and a closer look at curriculum delivery, strategies, and assessments was evaluated by our leadership team to ensure that expected growth is attained for each grade annually moving forward.

Mesa could not compare data from the Wisconsin Forward Exam for ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies to the district for the 2019-2020 school year due to the waiver from the Department of Public Instruction.

As part of the EL ELA curriculum, scholars in kindergarten, first, and second grades are assessed at the beginning of the year, middle of the year, and end of the year on alphabet recognition, sounds, phonics skills, and phonological awareness. They are then placed into small groups based on this assessment data. Teachers are then able to determine specific phonological awareness and phonics skills to teach each small group of students to help them progress as readers. The goal is to grow a whole phase or more during one school year. Below is a summary of the growth of scholars in kindergarten, first and second grades.

Four out of eighteen kindergarten students made one full year of growth. Six out of sixteen students did not attend virtual interventions regularly. Six out of seventeen first graders made one full year of growth. Three out of thirteen-second graders made one full year of growth. Three out of thirteen did not log in for virtual interventions.

As part of our RtI process, our third through eighth-grade scholars were placed into Tier 2 reading intervention groups based on iReady and STAR scores, as well as classroom data.

There were 22 third graders that were given the STAR Assessment. Eight had a .6 average increase. Ten decreased an average of .67 points. There was low attendance during the intervention block with some scholars. We had no STAR data for three of the scholars due to attendance issues.

There were 12 fourth-grade students tested and six made an average gain of .47 points. five decreased an average of .98 points, and one stayed the same; this student had low attendance during the intervention block. Twelve 5th grade students were tested. Nine increased by an average of .68 points; one decreased an average of .4 points. This student had very low attendance during the virtual intervention groups. Two students had no data; these students did not attend any of the intervention groups.

Sixth, seventh and eighth grades struggled to make growth during virtual learning so we do not have intervention data for these three grades.

Please note that the majority of the intervention was provided virtually. We are 100% confident that we will see greater growth this 2021-22 school year.

To continue the momentum toward meeting or surpassing our contract measures MESA has:

***Curriculum*** - Continue the full implementation of the EL Education Curriculum.

The implementation of a project-based science curriculum called Amplify, which integrates technology as well as an outdoor classroom to support environmental education.

***Professional Development*** - Professional Development opportunities increased from 8 days to 18 days to equip the teachers with knowledge, strategies, and skills in the areas of instruction, curriculum, and EL standards. (See appendix C for specific areas of focus). In alignment with the School Improvement Plan and the EL work plan, the first 90 days of the 2020-2021 school year teachers and staff met virtually every morning to hold a staff crew before school. This was the opportunity for the administration to model the crew concept so teachers are able to implement the concept with their scholars. ***Partnership*** - In partnership with MESA, Milwaukee Public Schools and the EL Education Director, the School Improvement Plan and the EL Work Plan were aligned. The alignment allows the MESA instructional and support staff to focus on culture, climate, and crew as well as learning intentions and student outcomes. These strategies foster a community of trust.

**3. Provide a description of how the school continued to provide educational and social-emotional support to students and families during the 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.**

#### **Social-Emotional Coach**

During the 2020-2021 school year, MESA hired a Social-Emotional Coach who provided various support during school closure. The coach's role under the direction of the school Principal and in collaboration with the Dean of Family Engagement or designee was to coordinate and implement trauma-informed practices in the school.

The Social-Emotional Coach roles and responsibilities were to:

- worked with administrative, instructional, and non-instructional staff to implement evidence-based trauma-informed systems to reduce re-traumatization, promote student resilience, and increase positive academic and non-academic outcomes for students.
- established a comprehensive trauma-informed approach to address both preventative and responsive measures for students.
- ensured that the existing school and community resources were utilized to work with students exposed to trauma. The Coach provided training and technical consultation to school staff and leadership on evidence-based practices and strategies.
- worked as a colleague with classroom teachers and parents to support student learning in all content areas with evidence-based trauma-informed practices.
- focused on individual and grouped professional development that expanded and refined the understanding of current social, educational, and economic issues related to urban families and behavioral and mental health services for children.
- attended training sessions in evidence-based trauma-informed practices, planned, coordinated, and implemented school-wide training initiative(s) and trauma-informed practices, organized program activities to ensure that identified objectives were met and identified needs of individual teachers in support of the School Improvement Plan and the EL Education Work Plan.

To support Social Emotional Learning, MESA hired a mindfulness and movement instructor who serves scholars and staff strategies that support Social Emotional needs. This position has provided an outlet for stress relief, especially during the pandemic. Our scholars and staff have participated in yoga, dancing, breathing exercises, stretching, and relaxation meditation.

### **Educational Resources**

A highlight of the support for our families during the closure was the hotspots that were purchased for scholars who required internet access. Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy provided a device for all scholars during the extended closure. If families were unable to access and or connect their devices, the Dean of Students, Dean of Family Engagement, and Assistant principal went to various homes to help families set up their instruments.

To support the various needs of our families, Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy provided a fall and winter supplementary materials pick up and offered additional weekly packs to families who requested them.

### **Leadership Support**

The Dean of Family Engagement organized professional development for parents to teach them how to navigate the various platforms. The Technology Coordinator provided professional development parents and staff on the different platforms offered during the extended closure.

### **Challenges**

Some challenges that occurred during the closure were as follows:

- families' devices were constantly repaired and dropped off during a pandemic.
- issues with the technology navigation of the various platforms
- issues with accurate attendance taking
- additional support for families unfamiliar with technology.

### **Success**

All scholars had their own devices, the school prepared additional resources for families to support virtual learning. Each scholar received a yoga mat to practice mindfulness at home. During the spring of 2021, MESA returned to in-person learning with 125 scholars in attendance daily. MESA continued to offer virtual education as well.

### **Additional Steps**

If a similar closure would occur in the future, MESA has taken the necessary steps to be proactive. All MESA scholars have one-on-one technology readily available for on-line instruction. Our curriculum has online components for staff and scholars. Teachers have practiced using online formats (Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom and or Seesaw) with all specific grade levels. Attendance will be taken daily throughout the day and submitted to our main office. Updated communication will be sent to families immediately via text alerts, email, and/or class Dojo. Communication will also be updated to our school website and our MESA staff will continue to support our MESA Community.

### **Financial Performance**

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

Through close and consistent budget management, administrative synergies with the parent organization MTEC, and outside funding resources, MESA has met its financial performance standards. MESA continuously meets its target of a balanced MPS budget, and clean audit, as evaluated and reviewed by a third-party audit firm.

MESA's financial performance against the year to date and the annual budget is reviewed by the MTEC Board and Finance Committee every other month, and spending is realigned as necessary to meet targets. Administrative synergies are maximized with MTEC, including shared resources in all key support efforts as well as Marketing and Communications. MESA continues to seek outside funding to enhance school programs that will benefit strategic planning projects.

MESA remains financially strong through close oversight by the MTEC Board Chair and Treasurer, Executive Director, Principal, and Finance Director. In addition, the continued strengthening of MTEC fiscal policies, procedures, and balance sheets provides a strong financial foundation for MESA. The oversight team continuously reviews materials and current resources for increased flexibility in managing expenses and improving cash flow management.

### **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.**

MESA is a well-functioning organizational structure as demonstrated by ongoing parental involvement. Parents are expected to attend two annual student-led conferences and at least two academic-related events to remain informed regarding their child's academic and behavioral performance as well as the educational standards provided by the school.

**Parental Involvement** - Because families perform a vital role in the education of their children, MESA fosters tools for engagement between families and staff. The tool strategy allows for an equal partnership of families and staff to support student achievement and school improvement. Every Trimester, the Parent Leadership Team meets to discuss school issues, obtain updated information, and give feedback on school-related ideas. The Parent Leadership Team (PLT) meets monthly to discuss curriculum, school data, student achievement, and plan events. Student-led conferences are held twice during the year to inform their parents about their academic goals and achievements. Students also share with their parents their learning styles.

Empowering families is a part of how we build mutually beneficial partnerships and collective efforts to maximize resources that promote greater student outcomes.

**Staffing** - MTEC in collaboration with the leadership team of Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy strives to hire highly qualified staff that support the social-emotional development of all students, are committed to lifelong learning, and participate in professional development for growth and well-being of self and the organization.

**Health and Safety** - The last two years highlighted the importance of self-care. MESA believes in order to take care of others we must take responsibility for our physical and mental health. We encourage staff to use their time off, embrace the true meaning of crew, and follow the CDC guidelines and recommendations to support the reduction in the spread of Covid19.

**School Enrollment** - MESA proposed school enrollment is a maximum of 500 scholars in grades K4-8. The current enrollment is 342. MESA continues to recruit families using multiple platforms to reach our proposed enrollment. During the summer of 2021 MESA hosted a pop-up enrollment fair and enrolled eight new scholars to the MESA family. At MESA we offer both in-person and online learning to attract various families.

**Discipline guidelines** - MESA continues to follow Milwaukee Public School's guidelines for Student Discipline.

**School Facilities** - Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy is housed in the former Milwaukee Public School 65th Street School. We have enhanced the site by painting the walls, grooming our courtyard, and adding an outdoor classroom.

**Community Partnership** - Some of our community partners are Smart Smiles (School-Based Oral Health Program), FAST Institute (Families And Schools Together), ACTS Housing, and FIIT financial literacy.

Community partnerships are essential to bringing module topics to fruition. In addition to planning field experiences, teachers contact local community partners related to the curriculum topics that they are studying. The community partners join the classroom to serve as local experts to provide scholars with expertise so that they are able to become well versed on the content. Therefore, scholars will develop a well-rounded understanding due to experiences both inside and outside of the classroom.

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

### **Parent Survey**

MESA parents were given several surveys from 2019-2021. These surveys were the *Return to School Survey (Fall 2020 and Spring 2021)*, *School Start Time Survey*, and the *End of School Year Survey*. According to the *End of the Year Survey*, 72% of the families believe the communication about the arrival procedures was very clear. Sixty-eight percent believe breakfast/lunch procedures were clear. Seventy percent agreed that the communication with the teacher about the child's academic progress was good. Sixty-two percent are interested in having transportation provided, while 68% support in-person learning over virtual learning. Eighty-nine percent will be returning in the Fall.

### **Student Survey**

Students were asked how much they are learning online versus face-to-face. There were 105 third through eighth-graders who responded: 29% believed that they are learning the same, 19% believed they are learning more or much more, while 52.4% believed they were learning somewhat less or much less. Next, students were asked about feeling safe about making mistakes with teachers and/or staff: 53% agreed or strongly agreed, 24.8% were neutral, and 21.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Then students were asked how difficult it is to focus on homework right now: 25% somewhat or very easy, 27% neither difficult or easy, while 47.7% somewhat difficult or very difficult. When asked how engaged are you in your classes: 53.4% were somewhat engaged, 36.2% were very engaged and 10% were not engaged. Please note: the student was conducted during the pandemic, which indicates students focus much better while in school. The last question scholars were asked was, what emotion did you feel during virtual learning: 48% felt frustrated, 39% felt happy, 21% felt loved, 25% felt excited and 32% felt safe.

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

Founded in 1996, the Milwaukee Teacher Education Center (MTEC) is a not-for-profit, results-oriented, teacher certification and professional development center designed to recruit, support, and retain teachers and school leaders in urban settings.

The Milwaukee Teacher Education Center Board of Directors governs the Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy. The MTEC Board oversees the development of the school's policies and procedures, fundraising efforts and approves the budget. They also hire the school leader, in conjunction with the MTEC Executive Director and community partners. Under the direction of the MTEC Board of Directors, the MTEC Executive Director, the principal is evaluated and offered support in the day-to-day leadership and management of the educational program.

The school leadership team, which includes the Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean of Students, Instructional Coach, Dean of Family Engagement, and a Special Education Coordinator, oversee the day-to-day leadership and management of the educational program which includes addressing the needs of scholars and parental concerns.

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

## **Academic Performance**

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

There are no proposed changes to the educational program. MESA will continue with the Amplify Science curriculum which includes hands-on science kits, software programs, and embedded professional learning opportunities. The Amplify Science curriculum was implemented this school year. MESA administration and staff will continue to implement the EL curriculum and focus on becoming an accredited EL school.

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

MESA proposed school enrollment is a maximum of 500 scholars in grades K4-8.

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

Appendix B provides an *At-A-Glance* of the school's goals and measurable objectives. It gives a support calendar, a summary of the multi-year impact goals, annual performance benchmarks across all three dimensions, high-level data points, implementation priorities for the year, and the foundational leadership goals. How the school will meet its goals is shared in columns three and four of the chart. This summary is shared with our stakeholders and is used with staff in conjunction with a comprehensive work plan.

## **Financial Performance**

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

The immediate financial plan is to continue with a balanced budget along the current fiscal path. Over the course of the last two years, we have been able to expand the education program to include mindfulness and movement, as well as social-emotional learning. The goal is to continue to provide and add the program with the budget forecast and expenses remaining aligned and competitive within the current market.

## **Organizational Performance**

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

MESA believes in enrolling families to increase participation as advocates, members of school councils, virtual classroom volunteers, and learning support at home. The more often parents participate in their scholars' learning, the more likely scholars are to achieve at high levels. We believe community involvement also plays a vital role in building the success of scholars and relationships with families and staff.

The Dean of Family Engagement position gives families a liaison in the school and is available to meet their needs. As a result, parent relationships, support, and satisfaction increased. We will continue to strengthen our efforts to partner with families and the community. MESA strives to engage, guide, energize, and motivate our scholars to produce their academic and social, and emotional successes.

## Parent/Family/Community Volunteers

All families/community members are encouraged to volunteer at MESA. These efforts are coordinated through the Dean of Family Engagement, the office staff, or a scholar's teacher. In an effort to support volunteer's skills and/or talents, multiple opportunities are available which includes:

1. **Tutoring Help**—During the Pandemic, parents in collaboration with teachers, assistance with Reading/Math support.
2. **Fieldwork/Special Projects**—With the use of Technology, parents, and teachers were able to experience virtual field days and complete school projects including the MESA Middle School STEM Science Fair.
3. **CREW** - Crew is a form of a meeting that is done every day in a scholar's classroom and once a month, led by the leadership team. In the pandemic, community and family members were encouraged to join Crew daily or monthly virtually.
4. **Celebrations of Learning** - This is the opportunity for scholars to share their learning with their families and the larger community. Celebrations of Learning may take the form of book talks, student-led tours, demonstrations, or displays. These presentations are a team effort and each scholar's contribution to the success of the group will be part of their grade in the applicable subject area.
5. **Professional Services/Expertise** - Many times a family member has a special skill, expertise, experience, or hobby that can be brought into the classroom or contribute to a school-wide project. Examples of classroom contributions include a nurse providing feedback on a scholar's health care presentation, an artist teaching animation skills, or a war veteran discussing his or her experiences. These also assist MESA scholars in building their background knowledge in preparation for celebrations.

## Newsletter

Our newsletter called, "The Eagle's Nest" is sent home on Tuesdays electronically. *The Eagle's Nest* has critical information about upcoming school events (i.e. dress down days, incentive celebrations, parent tips, etc). Scholars who meet the criteria to participate in school-wide incentives have their names listed in the newsletter. In addition, the newsletter includes an overview from the school principal with detailed information and updates from the Dean of Family Engagement. Parents/guardians are expected and encouraged to read "The Eagle's Nest" carefully each week to remain informed of important information.

## Parent Text Alerts

In order to provide immediate communication, MESA continues to use a text alert system. This form of communication allows parents/guardians to receive text messages and sometimes voice recordings with important school notifications.

## ClassDojo

ClassDojo keeps parents/guardians informed of their scholar's academic and behavior, including uniforms, homework, character expectations and conduct. Teachers share photos from class, important updates, and wonderful moments. Additionally, we use ClassDojo so that scholars are regularly recognized and awarded for demonstrating strong character, academic effort, and achievement.

**School-Based Incentives**

School-Based Incentives for Scholars will be awarded by the Deans of Students. The incentives may include dance parties, special treats, field trips, etc.

Scholars who meet or exceed the school-wide goal will qualify for the incentives. The incentive dates will be shared in our parent newsletter including the names of scholars who qualify for participation. Scholars who are exhibiting Habits of Scholarship (HOS) earn points on ClassDojo. Scholars will be invited to incentive-based celebrations monthly for earning the point totals.

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

Changes to the school's governance structure will include the Instructional Coach. The Instructional Coach will strengthen the academic structure of MESA.



# Appendix A

Janet Colvin  
Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy  
6600 West Melvina Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53216

EL Education  
247 West 35th Street  
Eighth Floor  
New York, New York  
10001  
ELeducation.org

September 10, 2021

Dear Janet Colvin,

I'm writing to communicate the progress of the Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy (MESA) based on the EL Education Implementation Review (IR) instrument that measures the implementation of the core practices of the EL Education school model.



As a reminder, the IR instrument contains 26 "Power Practice" rubrics across 5 domain areas: Curriculum, Instruction, Culture and Character, Student-Engaged Assessment, and Leadership. Power Practices are areas of the Core Practices theorized to have the greatest impact on student achievement across the three dimensions of Mastery of Knowledge and Skills, Character, and High-Quality Work. For reference, the score of schools that are highly implementing the model is **98**.



MESA experienced significant progress and an upward trend in its IR score moving from a score of **90** in the 2018-19 school year to a score of **108** in the 2019-20 school year. In the last 2020-21 school year, due to COVID, our school partners including MESA were able to opt out of the IR due to the extraordinary circumstances.

We look forward to our continued partnership and supporting MESA in the coming school year.

Yours in the work,

Roel Mason-Vivit  
Director, Partnerships (Midwest)  
EL Education



CC: Laci Coppins-Robbins- MTEC Executive Director, Penny Rossetto, EL School Designer



*Our Vision : 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.*

**2021-2022 Support Calendar**

**MASTER CALENDAR LINK**

The long-term goal is to build the internal capacity of every member of the school staff. In order to maximize your relationship with EL, it is essential that instructional leaders work alongside school designers whenever possible. Think strategically about how leaders and school designers' work with teachers or teams can impact school-wide implementation. **18 Direct Service Days, 14 with Penny 4 with Ashley**

Use the calendar below to plan out how the learning and structures will be sequenced and scheduled in support of the goals. **INCLUDE PLC's, teacher collaboration time, Walkthrough's, etc.**

<p><u>September:</u> Wed 8th - Baseline /Calibration Walkthroughs</p>	<p><u>October:</u> 7th- Walkthroughs</p>	<p><u>November:</u> Wed 10th- Walkthroughs &amp; Exit Ticket PD</p>	<p><u>December:</u> Mon 6th- Classrooms and MYR prep w ILT</p>
<p><u>January:</u> 3rd- PD Day &amp; MYR</p>	<p><u>February:</u> Wed 9th- Walkthrough</p>	<p><u>March:</u></p>	<p><u>April:</u> 25th- PD Day &amp; IR Scoring</p>
<p><u>May:</u> Wed 25th- HWP</p>	<p><u>June:</u> 07- PD Day?</p>	<p><u>July:</u> HOLD 1 day- EoY Work Planning</p>	<p><u>August:</u> HOLD 2 days- Back to school PD</p>

Mastery of Knowledge and Skills

2022-2023 MKS Performance Benchmarks

Reading--70% of students in grades K-5-8 will meet or exceed their projected growth according to the Spring 2022 STAR assessment.  
 Math--70% of students in grades K-5-8 will meet or exceed their projected growth according to the Spring 2022 STAR assessment.  
 Subgroup goal: 70% of SPTID students will meet or exceed projected growth according to the STAR assessment.

**Theory of Action:** If we live Student Engaged Assessment on a daily basis (LTs, SLC's, CFU, etc), implement the curriculum with integrity, and consistently implement academic interventions, all students will be able to demonstrate growth toward their academic goal.

Implementation Priorities: CP 28: Crafting and Using Learning Targets

<p><b>Faculty Learning Target</b></p> <p>I can design quality exit tickets aligned to learning targets.</p> <p>I can analyze exit ticket data to inform my instruction.</p>	<p>Internal Supportive Structures and Actions (Dimension Teams/ILT)</p> <p>PD's/support needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Crafting and implementing quality LT's</li> <li>● Designing Exit tickets</li> <li>● Lesson planning based upon exit ticket data</li> </ul>	<p>EL Support and Services to Build Staff Capacity</p> <p>Exit ticket examples from other EL schools/ PD on creating exit tickets on 11/10</p>
<p><b>Progress Monitoring Plan</b></p>		
<p><u>Baseline/Fall</u></p> <p>Walkthroughs on Nov 10th- teacher implementation of LTs (exit tickets?)</p>	<p><u>Midyear</u></p> <p>Teacher focus group, survey- January 3rd, 2022</p> <p>STAR Data</p>	<p><u>Spring</u></p> <p>April 25th, 2022</p> <p>Leadership team will complete spring walkthrough</p>
		<p><u>EOY</u></p> <p>May 25th, 2022</p> <p>STAR Data</p>

### Character

#### 2022-2023 Character Performance Benchmarks

- \* All MESA students (100%) will be able to articulate all HOS (respect, social justice, accountability, collaboration, integrity, respect, and perseverance) and reflect (both written and verbally) on how those are used in their daily lives, along with which HOS they are currently working on.
- \* Walk through data will reveal that 90% of students in all classrooms will be on task and engaged in learning.
- \* 100% of students will take part in fall and spring student led conferences.
- \* 100% of 5th and 8th graders will successfully participate in Passages.

**Theory of Action:** If MESA staff engage scholars in using the HOS throughout the day through explicit use of norm anchor charts, then the HOS will become an anchor in the culture of MESA.

#### Implementation Priorities: CP 23: Building the Culture and Structure of Crew

Faculty Learning Targets	Internal Supportive Structures and Actions (Dimension Teams/ILT)	EL Support and Services to Build Staff Capacity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can craft HOS anchor charts with scholars to ensure there are clear expectations in our learning environment.</li> <li>● I can empower scholars to actively engage in the daily use of the HOS anchor charts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Model the target at staff and department meetings</li> <li>● Provide feedback based on walk through data</li> </ul>	<p>August 9th PD on Crew and Norm setting through the HOS</p> <p>Model in classrooms as needed</p>
<b>Progress Monitoring Plan</b>		
<p><u>Baseline/Fall</u></p> <p>Walkthroughs on Sept 8th teacher implementation of Crew/HoS</p>	<p><u>Midyear</u></p> <p>Teacher focus group, survey- January 3rd, 2022</p> <p>Student Focus Groups</p>	<p><u>Spring</u></p> <p>April 25th, 2022</p> <p>Leadership team will complete spring walkthrough</p>
<p><u>EOY</u></p> <p>May 25th, 2022</p> <p>Student Focus Groups</p>		

### High Quality Work

#### 2022-2023 HQW Performance Benchmark

\*MESA scholars will produce high-quality work that is deeply connected to the environment, connects to big concepts across disciplines and matters to scholars and the larger community. MESA scholars will consider multiple perspectives, utilize peer and teacher feedback, and self-reflection in the creation of the final product.

**Theory of Action:** If teachers model and provide high quality feedback, scholars will be able to reflect, internalize, and apply feedback throughout the process of creating an authentic high quality product (via protocols, rubrics, and CFU).

Implementation Priorities:

Faculty Learning Target	Internal Supportive Structures and Actions (Dimension Teams/ILT)	EL Support and Services to Build Staff Capacity
<p>I can craft a rubric with my grade level team for a long-term, literacy based project.</p> <p>I can implement peer critique protocol (using the rubric) between students as well as teachers-students to improve student work.</p>		<p>Spring PD on creating quality rubrics</p>
<p>Progress Monitoring Plan</p>		

Baseline	Fall	Midyear	Spring	EOY
Walkthroughs on Sept 8th teacher implementation of Crew/HOS	Walkthroughs on Sept 8th teacher implementation of Crew/HOS	Teacher focus group, survey- January 3rd, 2022 Student Focus Groups	April 25th, 2022 Leadership team will complete spring walkthrough	May 25th, 2022 Student Focus Groups

### LEADERSHIP

**Leadership Team Mission:** This is about creating a student-centered culture, not about just implementing the work plan. The WHY we are doing the WP (it's about the kids). Equitable outcomes!

**Rationale:** We believe that when we have a cohesive school vision, partnered with a collaborative staff culture built on relational trust, we will greatly impact student growth in the areas of academic mastery, character and wellness.

**Implementation Priorities:**

**CP 34: Cultivating a Positive Culture**

Leadership Learning Targets	Structures and Leadership Actions	EL Support and Services to build capacity
<p>1- We can commit to monthly Walkthroughs using the Dimensions tool and providing teachers with timely feedback. (online scholars, sped)</p> <p>2- We can implement PLCs through modeling/understanding first trimester, second trimester we will create systems and structures to support staff implementation of PLCs</p>	<p>Staff PLC pre-post survey</p> <p>Create expectations for the implementation of PLCs</p>	<p>SD will provide support in using Dimensions tools</p> <p>SD will accompany Leadership Team on Walkthroughs monthly</p>

Milwaukee Environmental Sciences Academy  
Professional Development  
Trimester 1 August 16 – November 13

Month	Professional Development
New Teacher Orientation	August 5 - Monthly
Crew/EL Education Aligned	August 5
Introduction to Technology	August 5
Parent Engagement Strategies	August 5
Introduction to Coaching Cycles	August 5
EL Education	August 6
EL Education Unpacking Module and Unit 1	August 6
Amplify Science	August 10
EL Education Skill Block Prep	August 10
Culture and Climate	August 11
Technology	August 11
Mandated Reporting	August 11
Infinite Campus	August 13
My Math Training	August 13
Suicide Prevention Training	September 15
Homelessness Training	September 15
Families and Schools Together (FAST)	October 25