



| <b>Charter School Renewal Recommendation</b> |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Charter School                               | <b>Whittier Elementary School</b> |
| Date of Site Visit                           | <b>November 17, 2020</b>          |

The renewal recommendation is based on a thorough review and analysis of information and data from the following:

- Charter School Performance Summary
- Application for Renewal
- School Site Visit

| <b>Charter School Performance Summary</b>   |                  |                           |
|---|------------------|---------------------------|
| Rating:   | Met the Standard | Did Not Meet the Standard |
| <b>Educational Performance</b>  | <b>X</b>         |                           |
| <b>Financial Performance</b>  | <b>X</b>         |                           |
| <b>Organizational Performance</b>   | <b>X</b>         |                           |
| <b>Summary Comments:</b>  |                  |                           |
| <p>Whittier’s mission is to be a safe and caring learning environment where staff, families, and community relationships foster high academic achievement for students.</p> <p><b>Educational Performance:</b><br/>           Whittier has consistently met its academic performance standards meeting 100% of its measures of the term of the contract. Whittier not only meets or beats the district on the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) tests, they outperform the state in all areas of performance. They have a high stability rate and low mobility rate. Whittier has maintained a 95% attendance rate over the term of its contract. Whittier has exceeded or significantly exceeded expectations on the state report card over the past several years.</p> <p>For the 2019-20 school year, all federal and state requirements to administer academic assessments were suspended, as a result of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver granted by the Department of Education on March 23, 2020 and the Wisconsin Act 185 enacted on April 15, 2020, there were no WSAS assessments this year.</p> <p><b>Financial Performance:</b><br/>           Whittier has consistently met 100% of the financial performance measures in the contract. They are financially sound and have not demonstrated a budget deficit or revenue shortfall. Whittier’s financial audits indicate compliance with no material findings.</p> <p><b>Organizational Performance:</b><br/>           Whittier has consistently met 100% of the organizational performance measures throughout the term of the contract. They remain committed to the educational program. Whittier is a teacher led, instrumentality charter school that has a shared decision-making model. The school governing body is made up of parents, community leaders, and school staff. Whittier has an active parent organization that provides opportunities for families to engage in the learning experiences for their students.</p> |                  |                           |

## Application for Renewal

| Met the Standard  | Did Not Meet the Standard  |
|---|--|
| <p>The Application for Renewal provides <i>clear, concise and compelling information</i> in the areas of Educational, Financial and Organizational Performance. The school has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 <i>does not provide clear, concise and compelling information</i> in the areas of Educational, Financial and Organizational Performance. The school did not satisfactorily address application components. Responses lack details. Descriptions and/or examples are underdeveloped. 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> |
| <p><b>Whittier has met all components of its application for renewal based on the above criteria.</b></p>   |  |

### Summary Comments:

Whittier is a small elementary school with high academic rigor, a strong character development focus, high parental involvement, and a safe and friendly environment conducive to learning. Whittier has consistently demonstrated strong academic performance and a deep commitment to engage families in the school community. Whittier builds reading development at a young age, which provides a strong foundation when reading to learn. The inquiry and project-based learning offered at Whittier provides opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding of content standards in multiple forms.

Whittier's application included ample evidence of increased student achievement. The application is detailed and presents a clear picture of the school's efforts to perform at a high level. The school has implemented a restorative practice program tailored to meet each student by focusing on building confidence and academic achievement.

Whittier provided credible examples and documented evidence of its financial performance. The school is a teacher led school where the staff, leadership, and governing body all have input regarding school finances. There have been no material findings or deficits during the school's contract term.

Whittier illustrated sufficiently and convincingly that it is organizationally sound. Whittier develops its staff by providing internal professional development opportunities strategically focusing on student data and areas of need. There is a high level of parental involvement. Based on survey results, both students and families are satisfied with Whittier.

Whittier has clearly demonstrated that they have been a successful school for a significant amount of time. They have a model and a system that works. The application does set forth goals and plans for continued success over time and moving forward. However, as the demographics change and in light of a small decline in the state report card, Whittier might have provided more details of how they might enhance the program in the future.

## School Site Visit

| Met the Standard  | Did Not Meet the Standard  |
|---|--|
| <p>Charter school site visit provided excellent further evidence that the school is meeting performance standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School presentations clearly and effectively communicated information from its Application for Renewal.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School sufficiently addressed any issues/concerns raised by the MPS Charter School Contract Review Team members.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School (if appropriate) provided sufficient supplementary information to further clarify performance results and ratings.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Samples of student work and classroom visits reflect strongly and positively the school's teaching and learning practices.</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 presentations 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 ratings.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Samples of student work and classroom visits did not necessarily positively reflect the school's teaching and learning practices.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Whittier has met all components of its site visit based on the above criteria.</b></p>  |  |

### Summary Comments:

Whittier's virtual site visit included a virtual building tour, a presentation and testimony from staff, parents, alumni, school leader, and members of the governing body. It also included student focus groups and virtual classroom visits.

The virtual building tour offered an opportunity to see Whittier's unique one hallway building and utilization of space that accommodates small group instruction, critical problem solving, and use of technology. Whittier strives to use all available space to serve its students and families.

The presentation provided ample evidence of commitment and fidelity to the educational programming and goals of increasing student achievement, creating and maintaining a safe environment, creating appreciation of self-esteem, and strengthening parent and community relationships. The staff are committed to the school's mission and goals. Parents have a strong positive relationship with the school. They feel welcomed and a part of family community. Due to the small school structure, staff develop meaningful and lasting relationships with students. The staff indicated that they hold each other to high standards and that staff and students don't want to leave Whittier.

Whittier is committed to having its students be understanding of other's cultures through utilization of the school's values (be respectful, be responsible, and be safe). The students and families embrace these ideals, not only in school, but in life as well. Whittier strives to ensure that their students are proud of who they are and respect other's differences. One parent stated *"Whittier gives an environment where students become the best version of themselves and living to the upmost potential"*.

In addition to providing evidence of rigorous instruction with a self-esteem focus, Whittier discussed how it has utilized its para-professionals to provide assistance to students, specifically through restorative practices. There is a regular review of data to improve school performance and culture. There is a more strategic and intentional use of restorative practices, which is especially important as Whittier's demographics continue to change.

The staff agreed that the teacher-led model allows for everyone to have a voice at the school. Working in a small school helps cultivate a positive atmosphere with a positive school culture. Teacher's meet regularly and the staff embrace a family-like environment.

During the site visit, classroom observations demonstrated active student participation and learning.

Students were on camera and very engaged in the learning. Teachers were well planned, responsive to students needs, and engaged the students in learning.

The staff sufficiently explained the schools' teaching philosophy and interest in innovation, including the development of a restorative practice champion who works with the children and families to help support them, especially with a focus on mental health challenges and mindfulness.

There is a very active parent organization and there were numerous examples of parent involvement that made extra-curricular offerings possible. There is clearly a strong sense of community at the school and the alumni spoke of how formative their time at Whittier had been in their development. The parents spoke about a welcoming and supportive environment that focuses on student diversity, safety and respect.

During the student focus groups, the students communicated that they enjoyed the support that the staff provides and did not share anything they would want to change. One of the student focus groups' highlights was that the students mentioned staff bringing their homework packets to their homes if their parents were unable to pick them up from the school.

Current students and alumni alike have a great love of Whittier. They enjoyed the smaller class size and personalized instruction that Whittier offers. They enjoyed the closeness among peers and staff. More importantly, students felt prepared for the next steps in their education. There is a strong sense of pride from those that attended Whittier. Below is testimony from both students and alumni:

*I hope to one day teach at this school, where the teachers here had inspired me to become a teacher. – Alumni*

*I feel especially supported at Whittier because my teacher drops off my homework to my house and brings me a treat. – Current Student*

|          |                                      |   |
|----------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>X</b> | <b>Full-Term</b><br>Term of 5 Years  | <p>To be eligible, schools must be in the last year of the contract term and have achieved the following:<br/><b><i>There is a strong and compelling record of evidence that the school met or exceeded the performance standards in the areas of Educational Performance, Financial Performance, and Organizational Performance.</i></b></p> <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>  |
|          | <b>Short-Term</b><br>Term of 3 Years | <p>To be eligible, schools must be in the last year of the contract term and have achieved the following:<br/><b><i>There is a strong and compelling record of evidence that the school met or exceeded a considerable number of the performance standards in the areas of Educational Performance, Financial Performance, and Organizational Performance and/or shows continuous, meaningful improvement toward meeting the performance standards.</i></b></p> <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> 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><b><i>The school does not apply for renewal or the school's educational, financial, and/or organizational performance results do not meet defined standards and are deemed unsatisfactory. This would result in a recommendation for non-renewal/revocation.</i></b></p> <p><u>Guidelines for Recommending Non-Renewal / Revocation:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 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/revocation if evidence obtained from the school's Performance Summary, Application for Renewal, and School Site Visit make this a credible recommendation.</li> </ul>   |

**Summary Comments:**

Whittier is a high performing instrumentality charter school in Milwaukee Public Schools. The school has consistently outperformed the district and state on the WSAS over the term of the contract. They consistently meet the educational, financial, and organizational measures of its contract. The school has either significantly exceeded or exceeded expectations on the state report card.

The classrooms are vibrant with print rich materials. The virtual classrooms are engaging with high level of critical thinking questions that promote student discussions. There is evidence that Whittier teaches students to read so that students can read to learn and apply knowledge. Whittier provides a strong academic foundation to prepare students for future success.

It was evident that students, families, and staff are invested in the school. There was a strong indication of a safe and welcoming environment. The school has a great culture with a significant amount of parental involvement.

The school is in a great position to continue to improve its performance as they build confidence of students through its restorative practices and data analysis to meet the needs of all students. As the school's demographics continue to change over time, Whittier has the opportunity to intentionally use data to continue to improve the services it provides to all of its students of increasingly diverse backgrounds.

Whittier has a program that has and continues to be successful. Whittier simply provides students with strong instructional practices that promotes quality teaching and learning. It is evident by the outcomes that what Whittier has established is working. There is great pride and love for Whittier and it is evident in all of its stakeholders. The Team did note that the school will need to develop a succession plan in order to continue the quality program in future years for sustainability.

It is with the reasons mentioned above that the Charter School Review Team is recommending a full-term, five year renewal for Whittier Elementary School.

**MPS Charter School Review Team Members**

|                   |                                    |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Richard Anderson  | MPS Contract Law Coordinator       |
| Mickell Daniels   | Community Member                   |
| Patricia Ellis    | MPS Equity and Access              |
| Lisa Haar         | MPS School Performance Coordinator |
| Marva Herndon     | Milwaukee Board of School Director |
| Ashley Hughes     | MPS Finance                        |
| Suzanne Maldonado | Community Member                   |
| Megan O'Halloran  | Milwaukee Board of School Director |
| Marc Sanders      | MPS Research and Assessment        |
| Tracy Wozniak     | MPS Specialized Services           |

Signature: *Bridget Schock* Date: November 17, 2020  
Bridget Schock, Contracted School Services