



## MILWAUKEE EXCELLENCE CHARTER PROPOSAL FALL 2020

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Milwaukee Excellence is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, tax-exempt organization approved on November 16, 2015. Our federal tax ID # is 47-4978181

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Milwaukee Excellence

**Ranell Washington**  
American Family Insurance  
Partnership Development Advisor

### Contact Information:

**Maurice Thomas, Founder, President, & Chief Executive Officer**  
Email: [Maurice.Thomas@mkeexcellence.org](mailto:Maurice.Thomas@mkeexcellence.org) | Cell Phone: 414-403-5892  
School Address: 4950 N. 24th St. Milwaukee, WI 53209  
School Phone: 414-464-7188

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## I. Response to Current Charter School Performance

### 1. Provide a description of how the school has been faithful in implementing its educational program outlined in the charter proposal. \_\_\_\_\_

Milwaukee Excellence Charter School (MXCS or MX) has delivered on its promise to Milwaukee Public Schools - to create the best school in the city - after only three years of operations.

**Mission:** Through rigorous academics and character education essential for success, Milwaukee Excellence Charter School educates 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students to excel within and graduate from four-year colleges and to pursue the professions of their choice.

**Vision:** Milwaukee Excellence Charter School is a 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>-grade school. Milwaukee Excellence was authorized by the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Board of Directors on July 30, 2015. Starting with 120 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, Milwaukee Excellence will use a slow growth model, growing one grade at a time until we reach full and maximum capacity of 840 students in 2022. Currently, Milwaukee Excellence serves 543 students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. 97% of students are African-American, 17.2% of students receive special education services, and 77% of students are economically disadvantaged. Milwaukee Excellence is located at 4950 N. 24<sup>th</sup> St. Milwaukee, WI 53209.

**High-quality Education & Outcomes:** In 2018, Milwaukee Excellence was the top-rated school in the city of Milwaukee as determined by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) State Report Cards.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, our DPI State Report Card ranked Milwaukee Excellence as the twenty-third overall school in the state of Wisconsin. This is largely in part to the incredible student achievement and growth results we achieved with at-risk populations. In less than three years of operation, the reading and math scores as determined by results on the Wisconsin Forward Exam outpace many of the best charter and selective-magnet schools in Milwaukee.

**Access to Education for the Most Vulnerable Populations:** Milwaukee Excellence is non-selective in enrollment. 77% of students are economically disadvantaged. 17% of students received special education services in 2017 - 2018 with 16% receiving special education services in 2018 - 2019. Unlike many charter schools, Milwaukee Excellence provides school bus transportation. We provide transportation for all students that live north of Interstate-94 West. Schools that do not provide transportation to families limit enrollment for many economically disadvantaged families. Parents with flexible work schedules or vehicles - usually higher-income families - would be given an advantage in the enrollment process if our school did not provide a school bus for students on the north side of Milwaukee.

**Cost-effective Organization:** Milwaukee Excellence raised \$387,000 towards the FY20 (2019 - 2020) annual goal of \$329,000 as of June 30, 2020. We are able to run our school on a smaller budget because we are diligent about providing resources that first improve teacher quality and students' academic results above all other priorities. We spend nearly \$2,000 per teacher on professional development each year. Additionally, all students receive Chromebooks, binders, and all supplies from Milwaukee Excellence.

**Whole Child Education:** Milwaukee Excellence students benefit from increased educational opportunities through our partnerships with organizations including Beyond STEM, JET Constellations, Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee, the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee Upward Bound, and Marquette University Talent

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/education/2018/11/30/charter-schools-milwaukee-excellence-showing-impressive-early-results/2161297002/>

Search. Our middle school program extends beyond what is offered at many local schools by providing daily enrichment classes based on the unique talents and the individualized interests of our students. We hire teachers excited to bring their passion and expertise into our school in order to give students additional exposure to diverse career paths. Our educational model includes an expanded enrichment and extracurricular program including art, music, physical education, and athletics in all grades, as well as advanced placement courses, debate, and national student organizations in the high school. Comprehensively, we develop, support, and celebrate the growth of the whole child, in age-appropriate ways, through a character education in grades 6-12 that will give students the personal and interpersonal skills along with the aspiration and determination to thrive in a challenging world.

**Coding & Computer Science:** The realities facing schools are forever changed in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis that currently grips this country. Milwaukee Excellence is a forward-thinking organization and we believe we have created the conditions to have our students prepared to attain careers in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) professions. Starting in the 2020 - 2021 school year, Milwaukee Excellence will launch a new STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) class in grades 6 - 10 to support the conditions of our changing world.

Students in all grades 6 - 10 will take a STEAM class for the entire year. This class will focus on a set of capstone units that are rooted in students solving real-world problems. All tasks will be solved using the students' knowledge of coding and computer science. Students will apply these skills to their knowledge of problems facing their communities. These problems include but are not limited to: (1) food scarcity, (2) safety of autonomous vehicles, (3) infrastructure, (4) lack of arts in the community, and (5) a self-directed problem to solve using a 3-D printer. In high school, the class is focused solely on coding and computer science.

**Advanced Placement Classes:** Students at Milwaukee Excellence will take up to four (4) Advanced Placement (AP) classes before graduation. 100% of Milwaukee Excellence tenth-grade students will take the AP Computer Science test starting in spring 2021. In 2019, of the 1,884 AP Computer Science exams taken by students in Wisconsin only 36 were taken by African-American/Black students. Milwaukee Excellence will nearly triple that number with up to 120 students taking the AP Computer Science exam in 2021 (this current school year).

**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.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Results:** Currently, Milwaukee Excellence is the #2 rated school in Milwaukee Public Schools (as rated by DPI) and a National Title I Distinguished School.<sup>2</sup> Milwaukee Excellence is a five-star school according to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction having earned that honor for two consecutive years. Our proficiency rates are approaching the average of all students in the state on the Wisconsin Forward Exam after only our third year of operation. A few of our most notable highlights are below:

- **The top growth rating** of any school in the state. We earned a perfect score of **100** on student achievement growth for consecutive years.
- Milwaukee Excellence 8th graders **beat the state average** in math results. 40% of our students were proficient in 8th-grade math compared to 36% of students statewide. African-American students at Milwaukee Excellence are outpacing the state average after our first year assessed in this grade-level.
- Our math scores are **nearly three times the state average for African-American students.**
- Our reading scores **outpace the state average for African-American students.**
- Milwaukee Excellence is **one of seven MPS schools to earn a five-star rating for the 2018-2019 school year.**

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.eSeanetwork.org/ds/schools/milwaukee-excellence-charter-school>

- Milwaukee Excellence was the **only middle school (6th - 8th grade) with a five-star rating** in all of MPS for the 2018 - 2019 school year. This is an incredible feat considering our initial year with students is 6th grade.

**Figure 1: Milwaukee Excellence Wisconsin Forward Exam Results: 2018 - 2019<sup>3</sup>**

Wisconsin Forward Exam Tested Areas	Milwaukee Excellence Year 3	State Average	African-American Students Statewide
<b>Math: Percentage of Students Proficient &amp; Advanced</b>	33%	43.4%	11.6%
<b>English: Percentage of Students Proficient &amp; Advanced</b>	19.6%	40.6%	12.8%

As evidenced by the results above, Milwaukee Excellence is already closing the achievement gap between Milwaukee's highest-needs students and their more affluent and often white peers.

**How did we do it?** Reading and math scores for African-American students are at a historic low for our city. The academic program at Milwaukee Excellence is a common-sense approach to meet the needs of Milwaukee's economically disadvantaged students. Our approach gives students double reading (120 instructional minutes) and double math (120 instructional minutes) to accelerate student achievement.

It can be difficult to quantify the success of Milwaukee Excellence. **Figure 2** shows Milwaukee Excellence's DPI Accountability Rating as compared to other top-performing charter, choice, and public schools in Milwaukee. Milwaukee Excellence has demonstrated that we have a trajectory that is unmatched in education.

**Figure 2: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Accountability Rating 2018 - 2019<sup>4</sup>**

Rating	DPI Accountability Score	School Name	Ranking in Milwaukee County
Significantly Meets Expectations	89.5	Milwaukee Excellence	12th
Significantly Meets Expectations	88.7	Carmen High School Science & Technology	18th
Significantly Meets Expectations	84.7	St. Marcus	41st
Significantly Meets	83.5	Milwaukee College Prep - 38th St.	50th

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from: <https://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov/Dashboard/portalHome.jsp>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.mmac.org/uploads/1/1/3/5/113552797/msrcr-overall\\_scores\\_2018-19v2.pdf](https://www.mmac.org/uploads/1/1/3/5/113552797/msrcr-overall_scores_2018-19v2.pdf)

Expectations			
Exceeds Expectations	81.4	Hmong American Peace Academy	70th
Exceeds Expectations	80.9	Milwaukee College Prep - Lloyd St.	74th
Exceeds Expectations	78.3	Bruce Middle School	95th
Exceeds Expectations	76.5	Milwaukee College Prep - Lola Rowe	118th
Exceeds Expectations	75.2	Golda Meir	133th
Meets Expectations	73.6	Milwaukee College Prep - 36th St.	154th
Meets Expectations	68.9	Carmen Northwest Middle / High School	201st

The results indicate that we are already exceeding the results from more established middle schools across all sectors. The full Pupil Academic Achievement Report (PAAR) for Milwaukee Excellence can be found in **Appendix C**.

**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. \_\_\_\_**

**COVID-19 School Closure:** During the school closure brought on by COVID-19, Milwaukee Excellence was determined to create a system that works for a diverse set of family dynamics ultimately allowing students to master as much content as possible in ways that work for their unique living situations. Milwaukee Excellence found that our Asynchronous Learning Model in combination with synchronous office hours allowed families and teachers to determine the needs of students as they completed assignments to achieve mastery.

Teachers at Milwaukee Excellence were tasked with creating the following each week:

- Four double-planned lesson plans (teacher script and students responses included) posted online
- 10-minute video executing the introduction to new material for the lesson
- One weekly quiz to assess students' mastery of the new material
- Wellness checks for all families each week. Voice-to-voice contact had to be established via phone for all families.<sup>5</sup> Messages left by teachers did not count as a contact.

**Full Curriculum Open to The Public:** The full online curriculum was innovative in its approach. As far as we know, Milwaukee Excellence is the only high-performing charter, traditional, or choice school to make its entire curriculum available to the public during COVID-19. We believed this was the best approach to allow all

<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18USKdO6B-12858O\\_E825MVexnG7sF79\\_iEC8CqO6lZI/edit#gid=152718527](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/18USKdO6B-12858O_E825MVexnG7sF79_iEC8CqO6lZI/edit#gid=152718527)

students to continue learning as time permits. It was imperative to create a system that empowered students to complete assignments ahead of schedule and also with the ability to complete assignments in higher grade levels. For students that need remediation, teachers directed students to assignments in lower grades that would help support their learning needs. In addition, all Milwaukee Excellence students have yearly access to software on ALEKS math and LEXIA English support to remediate learning gaps or to accelerate their learning.

**Strong School Culture on Social Media to Build Community:** Milwaukee Excellence facilitated three to four cultural events each week for all students. Weekly Tuesday Trivia for all families was an excellent way for families to connect. Between 20 and 50 families participated each week. Winning families earned prizes from Milwaukee Excellence. This innovation will continue even when school becomes 100% face-to-face in the future. A few of our most notable events are listed below:

- Moore Fitness - Exercise Class with Mr. Moore Virtual Exercise Class
- Virtual Cheerleading Tryouts and Practice
- Virtual Scavenger Hunts
- Virtual Escape Room using Zoom breakout rooms
- Virtual Career Fair
- Virtual Talent Show
- Virtual 8th Grade Graduation Celebration<sup>6</sup>
- Virtual Cooking Classes
- Virtual Movie Night
- Virtual Anime Club

**COVID-19 School Closure Success:** Milwaukee Excellence routinely surveys parents and students. In our most recent survey during the COVID-19 school closure, our parents were extremely satisfied with our program. **Figure 3** outlines our most recent parent survey results.

**Figure 3: Milwaukee Excellence Parent Survey July 2020**

Parent Survey Questions	Rating
On a scale from 1 - 5, from Very Dissatisfied to Very Satisfied: Rate Milwaukee Excellence technology support during virtual learning.	4.2
On a scale from 1 - 5, from Very Dissatisfied to Very Satisfied: Rate Milwaukee Excellence's communication during virtual learning.	4.3

**COVID-19 Challenges:** Since COVID-19, we've purchased chromebooks for all students with high-quality webcams to fully engage students in our Zoom and Google-Classroom-based virtual learning. We purchased up to 50 new 50 Chromebooks this summer to meet the technology needs of our students. Additionally, Milwaukee Excellence purchased 100 hotspots with unlimited internet for students in need of reliable internet access.

## Financial Performance

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

<sup>6</sup> Video found here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy\\_WCHxb1Ck&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy_WCHxb1Ck&feature=youtu.be)



The Milwaukee Excellence Board is committed to sound financial management and ensuring sound oversight of public revenues and the school’s sustainable viability for the term of our charter and beyond. We use conservative budgeting that allows us to maximize educational outcomes for students while minimizing financial risks. Our budget modeling includes revenue inflation for all years that is more conservative than state projections, and annual expense inflation of 2.5%, with health expenses estimated at 4% annual inflation. Revenues are estimated at the average yearly enrollment, while expenses are estimated based on the beginning of the-year enrollment targets. This is a very conservative model.

We have maintained a contingency fund each year; this fund is set at 9% of the current year’s expenses in Year 4, scaling down to 6% by the end of the charter. We will work to maintain a surplus each year beyond our budgeted contingency funds, which will ensure that we have adequate reserves for economic uncertainty. We budget for positive cash flow, with adequate cash on hand to satisfy current liabilities, while maintaining up to four months of cash on hand to cover salaries and health expenses for our employees.

## 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:** The founding team of Milwaukee Excellence consists of Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Maurice Thomas and a high capacity Board of Trustees. Mr. Thomas recruited and interviewed nearly 300 Milwaukee community members in order to select the current Board. Their professional expertise lies in law, finance, facilities, education, executive management, strategic planning, accounting, and community development. Two board members have degrees in law and four have a Master’s in Business Administration. This team is committed to comply with laws and regulations outlined by the state of Wisconsin, the Department of Public Instruction, and all relevant federal laws.

The organizational model in **Figure 4** reflects the organizational hierarchy of reporting and supervision at Milwaukee Excellence Charter School.

**Figure 4: Milwaukee Excellence Organizational Model**

Employee	Direct Report
President / CEO	Board
Director, Special Education	Senior Director, Talent & Compliance
High School (HS) Operations Manager	HS Principal
Middle School (MS) Operations Manager	MS Principal
3 MS Sped Teachers	Director, Special Education
2 HS Sped Teacher	Director, Special Education
HS Operations Associate	HS Operations Manager
7 Teachers	HS Principal
Assistant Principal	HS Principal
HS Dean of Students	HS Principal

5 HS Educational Assistants	Instructional Coach
MS Assistant Dean	MS Dean of Students
MS Operations Associate	MS Operations Manager
15 Teachers	MS Principal
MS Assistant Principal	MS Principal
MS Dean of Students	MS Principal
7 MS Educational Assistants	Instructional Coach
Vice President / Chief Academic Officer	President & CEO
Chief Financial Officer	President & CEO
Marketing / Development Associate	President & CEO
Senior Director, Talent & Compliance	Vice President / Chief Academic Officer
MS Principal	Vice President / Chief Academic Officer
HS Principal	Vice President / Chief Academic Officer
Instructional Coach	Vice President / Chief Academic Officer
Social Worker	Senior Director, Talent & Compliance

**Parental Involvement:** Milwaukee Excellence has established the Phoenix Parents Organization of Milwaukee Excellence that meets monthly with Principals to discuss their satisfaction with the academic program and communication with Milwaukee Excellence. Members of the group are invited to present annually to the Board, and will oversee semi-annual parent surveys on the programs and policies of the school, the results of which will be provided to Management and the Board. Like all members of the community, families will be encouraged to consider serving as members of the Board, and with interest, will go through the same vetting process as other interested individuals.

**Discipline Guidelines:** Milwaukee Excellence maintains a strong school culture through an incentives-based program that rewards students for a growth mindset as well as academic and behavioral excellence. Additionally, in 2019, Milwaukee moved to a “Zero Suspension Policy” to make all major infractions restorative for students. In 2019-2020, Milwaukee Excellence issued suspensions to less than four of its 433 students which is less than one percent of our total student population. While it is not yet a perfect system, we believe that we are on a path towards true equity for black students as it relates to discipline.

**Staffing:** In a recent study by the National Charter School Research Fund, urban charter schools in Wisconsin serving predominantly low-income students of color saw annual teacher turnover between 40% and 60%.<sup>7</sup> This is a troubling statistic as the same study found that schools with high turnover saw half the student achievement as schools with more stable staffing. With that said, Milwaukee Excellence is excited to report a 78% teacher-retention rate from year one to year three. Additionally, over 50% of our teachers in 2019 identified as African-American. It will be critical for us to retain and develop our talent as we continue to expand and grow in the years to come. **Figure 5** outlines the Milwaukee Excellence teacher retention data.

<sup>7</sup> Retrieved from [https://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/brief\\_ics\\_Attrition\\_Aug10\\_0.pdf](https://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/brief_ics_Attrition_Aug10_0.pdf)

**Figure 5: Milwaukee Excellence Teacher Retention Data**

Retention	Year 1 2016 - 2017	Year 2 2017 - 2018	Year 3 2018 - 2019	Year 4 2019 - 2020
Teaching Staff Members	6	12	18	29
Returning Teaching Staff	5	9	14	15
Teacher Retention Rate	83%	75%	78%	52%

**Health & Safety:** Milwaukee Excellence utilizes MPS services for nutrition, security, and sanitation. MPS provides these services through our lease. Milwaukee Excellence is proud to partner with MPS to have these excellent services within our school.

**Enrollment:** The vision of Milwaukee Excellence is to create a high-performing school for the students of Milwaukee. Our school serves student populations that are traditionally underserved or labeled “at-risk” such as students with special needs and African-American students. 97% of students are African-American, 77% are economically disadvantaged, and 16% receive special education services according to Wisconsin DPI. These rates outpace the Milwaukee Public Schools district averages. **Figure 6** outlines the City of Milwaukee zip codes with the highest percentage of Milwaukee Excellence students.

**Figure 6: Milwaukee Excellence Student Residency (Students and Percent of Total Enrollment)**

Zip Code	Milwaukee Excellence Student Population	Geographical Area
53209	96 students - 21.5%	Neighborhood of school
53216	59 students - 13.2%	Center of north side; adjacent to neighborhood zip code
53218	67 students - 15%	Far Northwest side; adjacent to neighborhood zip code
53206	39 students - 9%	Center of north side; adjacent to neighborhood zip code
53210	36 students - 8%	Adjacent to 53206 and 53216

**Facilities:** Milwaukee Excellence is currently located at 4950 N. 24th (McNair Building). We are grateful to lease space from MPS. In order to fulfill the growth projections for our school that were outlined in our initial charter, we are respectfully requesting additional space from MPS.

At the time of this submission there is not a secured location for Milwaukee Excellence High School. The Milwaukee Excellence Board will work with the district leadership to identify a location in the city for Milwaukee Excellence High School. Milwaukee Excellence would like to explore a single-site location for the entire middle and high school program. Milwaukee Excellence would also be open to co-locating at a traditional high school to ensure our students receive the full high school experience.

We believe that we will continue our tradition of excellence if we are able to secure more space within MPS. Milwaukee Excellence would face incredible challenges if unable to secure adequate space in an MPS facility for our high school program.

**Community Partnerships:** Milwaukee Excellence has partnered with various organizations since its inception in 2016. This has led to the highest state report card results of any school in MPS over the last two academic school years. Our students are mentored by the best-in-class organizations listed below:

- Boys & Girls Club Grad-Plus Program
- Pearls For Teen Girls
- UWM Future Success Program
- Marquette Talent Search
- Beyond STEM MKE
- Jet Constellations
- Beyond STEM

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

Milwaukee Excellence maintains one of the lowest mobility rates in the city with less than 3% of students and families leaving Milwaukee Excellence during the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018-2019 school year. We believe this is the strongest indicator of students and parents satisfaction with the program at Milwaukee Excellence. Additionally, attendance at Milwaukee Excellence is over 94% every year since the 2017-2018 school 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 C**.

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

**The Board of Trustees:** Milwaukee Excellence will be governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is accountable for upholding the organization's mission and complying with all state and federal laws to ensure the school is successful and sustainable. The Board will delegate all management duties to the Chief Executive Officer, who will serve as a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees and will report on the school's progress at bi-monthly public board meetings.

**Founder & Chief Executive Officer:** The CEO is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of Milwaukee Excellence and is overseen by the Board. The Chief Executive Officer is charged with setting the vision and direction of the organization in partnership with the Board of Trustees. Each year the Chief Executive Officer receives an annual evaluation from the Board of Trustees based on the accountability plan outlined in the charter and any additional goals agreed upon by the Board of Trustees. The Chief Executive Officer reports directly to the Board of Trustees and is the only staff member to do so.

The Milwaukee Excellence Board has accomplished the following to create the best middle school in MPS:

- Raised \$700 per student since its inception
- Awarded a \$750,000 Charter School Planning Grant after our planning year
- Elected a board that includes over 30% People of Color representation since 2017
- #1 Rated school in MPS in 2018 and #2 rated school in MPS in 2019
- 11 of 16 school leadership positions are staffed by people of color

## II. Plans For Continued Success

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

The educational program at Milwaukee Excellence has not changed materially. One addition to our academic program is the focus on coding & computer science classes for all students. All Milwaukee Excellence 10th graders will take the Advanced Placement (AP) Exam at the conclusion of the 2020 - 2021 school year. According to Code.org, only 42% of students in the State of Wisconsin receive foundational computer science classes. Of the 1,884 AP Computer Science exams taken in Wisconsin during 2019, only 36 were taken by black students. Milwaukee Excellence will have up to 120 students take the AP Computer Science exam in 2021.<sup>8</sup>

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

Milwaukee Excellence is a 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade charter school for the Milwaukee Public Schools district. Starting with 120 6<sup>th</sup> grade students (four classes of 30 students each), Milwaukee Excellence uses a slow growth model, growing one year at a time until it reaches its full capacity of 840 students in 2022.<sup>9</sup> Milwaukee Excellence consists of two academies: Middle School (grades 6-8) with 360 students at full capacity and High School (grades 9-12) with 360 students at full capacity. **Figure 7** illustrates the five-year growth plan and reflects the full capacity of the school.

**Figure 7: Full Capacity Student Enrollment Plan From 2020 - 2026**

		Student Enrollment Projection with no attrition					
		20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26
<b>Milwaukee Excellence Charter School Enrollment</b>	Grade 6	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Grade 7	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Grade 8	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Grade 9	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Grade 10	120	120	120	120	120	120
	Grade 11		120	120	120	120	120
	Grade 12			120	120	120	120
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>600</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>840</b>

### 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. \_\_\_\_\_

Milwaukee Excellence will adhere to the same performance measures as outlined in “Section I. E: Performance Indicators and Graduation/Promotion Requirements” of the initial charter signed on December 28, 2015.<sup>10</sup>

The results indicate that we are already exceeding the results from more established middle schools across all sectors. Additionally, we are on track to surpassing the proficiency rates for high-performing traditional, choice, and charter schools. In order to meet our ambitious goals, we have established the following three

<sup>8</sup> Retrieved from: <https://code.org/advocacy/state-facts/WI.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> BES schools Excel Academy and Nashville Prep are the highest performing charter schools in their respective states. Each school used a slow-growth model starting in grade five to launch their schools.

<sup>10</sup> Retrieved from: <https://esb.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/attachments/f7d4d519-aae0-4040-a426-02b4122203b5.pdf>

pillars (1) Efficient Data-Driven Systems, (2) Student Voices Matter (3) Results show us the light. The pillars are outlined below:

**1. Efficient Data-Driven Systems:** We use data as our main strategy to make changes for any initiative that will increase student achievement. We engage in a root-cause analysis at multiple levels. Below are examples of our data-driven systems:

- **Wildly Important Goals:** These are our large schoolwide goals used to know if we are achieving our desired outcomes over time. Our Wildly Important Goal is “100% of students score a 24 or higher on the ACT in their junior year”.
- **Data Cycle Meetings:** Teachers and leaders meet with their principal to discuss and analyze their class data monthly. It is a rigorous interrogation of the data.
- **Teacher Performance & Evaluation:** Teachers are evaluated biannually on a 5 point scale weighted based on student achievement results, our core values, student surveys, parent surveys, and instructional moves.
- **Observations and Feedback Cycles:** Teachers submit lesson plans two weeks in advance of the class being taught. Leaders send feedback on Sundays that must be remedied by Wednesday so the lessons are better for the upcoming Monday. School leaders observe teachers and give teachers feedback daily to improve instruction.
- **Exit Ticket Trackers:** Teachers give exit tickets (a five-question quiz) daily to assess if students met the lesson objective. We track the progress on our walls to be visible to all.
- **Data Driven Instruction:** We use daily exit tickets, Friday quizzes, and writing assessments to make changes during professional development on Fridays.

**2. Student Voices Matter:** We see students as collective participants in their education at Milwaukee Excellence. We provide space for students to speak and listen to each other. Below are examples of how we show that student voices matter:

- **Show Call Explanation:** We use document cameras to have students explain their answers (correct or incorrect) to the class. We use this opportunity to push learning to a higher level or to correct misconceptions.
- **Tribe Circles:** Students meet in morning circles to go over team building activities. We teach our students our core values through these morning circles.
- **Student Symposium:** In English, students present projects on topics that are of interest to them. Students share their learning by writing an essay and completing a project board to share with their friends and families.
- **Turn and Talk:** Students have quick conversations to explain their answers to their desk partner. Teachers use three to five turn-and-talks per lesson. This teaches our students to use complete sentences and to actively listen to their teammates.

The final way we show that students' voices matter is with a Daily Dedication from one student to start each class period. The Daily Dedication allows students to share their inspirations with the rest of the class while teaching the soft skills (eye contact, audible voice, etc.) that are needed to succeed in college and the business world. Character is an essential part of our model. The teacher’s criteria for success for the Daily Dedication is below:

#### **Daily Dedication Criteria for Success**

Introduction of Presenter: “My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am a proud member of the Duke 8 Cohort.”

- a. Smile and engage the audience
- b. Eye Contact
- c. Voice Audible

Dedication Statement: "I dedicate my work today to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

45 - 60-second presentation

- d. 15-second introduction
- e. 30-second explanation of dedication

The ability to communicate effectively daily sets our students apart from many students in Milwaukee.

**3. Results Show Us the Light:** We operate in a place of facts and not feelings. We have to approach results as a tool that guides our efforts towards corrective action.

- **Order of the Phoenix:** We communicate on Wednesdays and Sundays with an email each week displaying our data. We use this information to know if we are improving as a school.
- **Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Scores:** We have a full day of professional development after each round of MAP testing. We spend the entire day analyzing the data and making individual plans for each student.
- **Data Based School Leadership Team:** Four teachers lead this leadership team to analyze our school-wide data monthly. This builds our leadership pipeline while also allowing teachers to hold each other accountable.
- **Grade Point Average (GPA) Analysis:** Students analyze their GPAs at the end of each week. We invest students so that they are aware of what GPA it takes to go to the best colleges in America.
- **Cumulative Assessments:** We use assessments from Achievement First Charter School in New York and Connecticut to assess our students. Achievement First was a finalist for the Broad Prize for the best charter school in the country in 2018.<sup>11</sup>
- **Teacher Surveys:** We survey teachers often to provide feedback on the effectiveness of our school. Teachers are able to give direct feedback to all leadership team members on numerous occasions.
- **Student Surveys:** We survey students often to provide feedback on the effectiveness of our school. Students are able to give direct feedback to all teachers and leadership team members on numerous occasions.
- **Forward Test Analysis:** We use the MAP results to make predictions about our upcoming Forward Exam scores. We use The Linking Study - a tool that is often overlooked by other schools - that gives us valuable data on students' predicted scores.<sup>12</sup>
- **Travel Enrichment:** Getting students out of the classroom and engaging in expeditionary learning is a critical part of their development as future citizens of America. For the majority of our students, Milwaukee has been home for their entire life. Many sixth graders had not left the state until this past May, when 90 sixth graders and a staff of eleven embarked on a weeklong visit to Washington, D.C. While in D.C., students visited two university campuses, Howard University & Georgetown University, toured countless monuments, and visited the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Museum of African American History & Culture, as well as the Holocaust Museum. Students were required to submit an application and an essay to attend the trip, as well as uphold certain academic and behavioral standards aligned to the Milwaukee Excellence FIRST values. D.C. trips are ordinarily reserved for eighth-grade students, but Milwaukee Excellence knows that if we want the trajectory for our students to be different, we must hold the bar higher and provide them with opportunities to see places outside of their neighborhood. This year sixth graders will travel to Washington D.C., seventh

<sup>11</sup> Retrieved from: <https://broadfoundation.org/achievement-first-dsst-and-uncommon-schools-named-2018-broad-prize-finalists/>

<sup>12</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.nwea.org/resources/wisconsin-linking-study/>

and eighth graders will travel to St. Louis, MO, and 9th and 10th graders will travel to Memphis, TN. Travel, also, shows us the light.

## Financial Performance

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

Milwaukee Excellence has built an organization that functions almost exclusively on the per-pupil state allocation and the Title I funds provided by the federal government. If faced with a budget shortfall, we will approach cost-cutting from a mission-driven perspective, seeking to maintain the instructional programming and staff necessary to meet student needs. We will prepare multiple contingency budgets as a precaution for an unexpected increase in expenses or a decrease in revenues. We will maximize our community resources and partnerships to provide additional resources for students. To minimize the risk of a shortfall, we will ensure proper controls and monitoring of attendance, enrollment, and financial data. We will also engage in monthly forecasting with our CFO to ensure that our projections reflect our financial needs.

**Major Revenue Assumptions:** We continue to enroll 120 students in the sixth grade every year of operation. By the end of the second charter, we anticipate a school enrollment of approximately 840 students. The major assumptions are listed below:

- \$9,165 per student is the projected per-student allocation by the state according to Wisconsin state statute 118.40(2r)(e)2p. This is a conservative estimate as it is based on the 2020 - 2021 allocation.
- 15% - 20% of our student population will require special education services which is similar to the Milwaukee Public Schools district average. We anticipate receiving IDEA funding for each student.

**Expenditure Assumptions:** At Milwaukee Excellence, we believe in creating an environment that is sustainable for all employees. Wages and compensation are competitive with the Milwaukee Public School dis.

Our five to six-teacher model per grade level gives us the ability to have small-group instruction, tutoring, two literacy teachers and two math teachers in each grade level in the middle school. As our most valuable asset, staff constitutes approximately 65% of overall expenditures.

**Grants:** Milwaukee Excellence has submitted and won large grant requests in the past from Herb Kohl Philanthropies, the Bradley Foundation, the Burke Foundation, and the Kelben Foundation. We intend to grow our relationship with all funders in Milwaukee to increase their annual giving. Additionally, Milwaukee Excellence won a competitive grant from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for \$750,000.

**Financial Forecast:** Milwaukee Excellence has submitted balanced budgets to MPS throughout the duration of the initial charter agreement. Milwaukee Excellence Founder & CEO, Maurice Thomas, continues to raise approximately \$700 per student enrolled. The budget Milwaukee Excellence submitted to MPS has always been balanced and represents the financial viability of our school. The full budget is found in **Appendix G**.

## Organizational Performance

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

Milwaukee Excellence will continue to include parental and community involvement in the growth of Milwaukee Excellence.



Our core value of team lives inside and outside of our school building through the work of our families:

**Annually:** Parents attend Orientation in August. **Biannually:** Parents are required to attend Parent and Teacher conferences. We provide parents with a biannual satisfaction survey as a part of our accountability plan.

**Cyclically:** Students receive a report card home at the end of every quarter (every 10 weeks) that must be picked up by a parent or guardian from the school. At the midpoint of every quarter, students receive a progress report detailing their mid-trimester achievement. **Monthly:** Parents receive a monthly newsletter with key events, dates, and a message from the Principal. **Weekly:** Students receive their behavior paycheck which must be signed by a parent or guardian as a homework requirement. The paycheck includes comments from teachers. **Daily:** Parents and teachers communicate through the daily homework log, required to be signed by a parent or guardian each night.

Milwaukee Excellence uses social media to gauge our influence in the broader Milwaukee community. As of June 30, 2020, Milwaukee Excellence has a 5.0 rating on a 5-point scale for our Facebook rating; our primary mode of communication on social media.<sup>13</sup>

Parents at Milwaukee Excellence expressed a need for more athletics and student awards ceremonies from the school. To improve our relationships with parents and the community, Milwaukee Excellence has done the following and will continue to improve on the following events listed below:

- Monthly Virtual Town Halls from the CEO / ED / Principal
- Developing a relationship with the University of Wisconsin - Madison PEOPLE Program
- Monthly Newsletters
- Quarterly Attendance Awards for Parents & Students
- Grade-Point-Average (GPA) Breakfast Ceremony for Parents & Students above 3.0
- Increased End-of-Year Academic Achievement Awards
- Increased End-of-Year Athletic Awards. See below for the results:
  - Milwaukee Excellence is the current 8th Grade Girls Basketball MPS Champion in MPS in 19 - 20
  - Milwaukee Excellence is the current Middle School MPS Track Champion (All Genders) in 18 - 19 (there was no track season in 19 -20) in MPS
  - Milwaukee Excellence was the 3rd place 8th Grade Boys Basketball team in MPS in 18 - 19
  - Milwaukee Excellence was the 6th Grade Girls Basketball Champion in MPS in 18 - 19 (no team in 19 - 20)
  - Milwaukee Excellence is the Middle School Flag Football Team in MPS for 19 - 20

Overall, Milwaukee Excellence parents wanted more extracurriculars for our students. Milwaukee Excellence delivered on that need more than any other middle school in MPS in the last three years. As a small charter school, Milwaukee Excellence has garnered awards in athletics that outsize our student population and educational program.

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

There are no changes to the school's governance structure.

<sup>13</sup> Retrieved from: [www.facebook.com/mkeexcellence](https://www.facebook.com/mkeexcellence)