



# Schools and Communities United

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## North Point Lighthouse Academy

**Grades K4-6 — In its 3rd year as a City charter**

**Enrollment—Beginning of 2013-14 year: 276. End of school year: 263**

Overview: In 2013-14 (its first time measured for proficiency), academic performance was near the bottom among City charters. Half of the 14-person teaching staff left during the year; 2 were replaced and 5 positions were left unfilled. Three remaining teachers were not DPI-licensed. The corporate parent has obtained three charters--one each from the City, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). It pulled out of its MPS charter before opening the school. It has not opened its UWM-chartered school (originally scheduled to open in 2013). Its City charter is its only Milwaukee school.

### **Report from Review Committee's Consultant (Children's Research Center/National Council on Crime and Delinquency):**

"CRC recommends that [North Point Lighthouse Charter School] continue to receive regular, annual academic monitoring with particular attention to the school improvement recommendations."

### **National management**

- Operated by Lighthouse Academies, based in Framingham, Mass.
- Lighthouse Academies operates 18 schools in 7 states. This is the only one in Wisconsin.
- Lighthouse Academies was started in in 2003 by Mike Ronan, with help from Scott Hamilton, a leader in the KIPP charter network and in Teach for America

### **Local management**

- The corporate parent has obtained three charters--one each from the City, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). It pulled out of its MPS charter before opening the school. It has not opened its UWM-chartered school (originally scheduled to open in 2013). Its City charter is its only Milwaukee school.
- In 2012-13, the school received \$1,792,419 in state charter school aid (\$7,775 per) and other state and federal education grants.
- In 2012-13, the school paid \$111,378 management fee to its parent, Lighthouse Academies; paid \$100,160 to Lighthouse Academies as "paydown with interest" of prior funding; paid \$220,000 to Canyon-Agassi for rent (see below.)
- In 2012-13, its first year, had a deficit covered by a \$460,000 loan from Lighthouse Academies. The ML Tharps financial review prepared for the City noted: "It is imperative that management take the necessary steps to alleviate the accumulated deficit."
- In 2012-13, the school's local governing board consisted of: Jason Fields (President), Adam Peck, Pamela Gustafson, Paul Snyder, Kevin Hanson, Aaron Seligman, Danny Goldberg, Karole Kimble, Michael Ronan, Corrine Brantner. Information on 2013-14 board not readily available, though Children's Research Center noted that during the year, the parent representative and the chair of the community engagement committee left.
- In 2013-14, state charter school aid was approximately \$2.2 million.

[Over]

## **Facility**

- 4200 W. Douglas Ave. The building is a former steel fabrication plant, purchased in 2011 for \$585,000 and currently assessed at \$1,937,000. The building is owned by Canyon-Agassi Charter School Facilities Fund, a Los Angeles-based for-profit company that buys, develops, leases and sells properties to charter school operators. Former tennis star Andre Agassi is co-owner of Canyon-Agassi.
- The school is located amid industrial and commercial properties and has a electricity tower and a transformer in back.

## **Overall School Accountability Score from Department of Public Instruction**

- 2012-13: Not rated (first year of operation)
- 2013-14: Score 29.4; "Fails to Meet Expectations." Ranked 19th of 19 non-MPS charters; 8th of 8 City charters

## **Student Achievement Score from Department of Public Instruction**

- 2012-13: Not rated (first year of operation)
- 2013-14: Score 21.0—18th of 19 non-MPS charters; 7th of 8 City charters

## **Proportion of students considered Proficient or Advanced [DPI]**

- 2013-14 Mathematics 7.0%—17th of 19 non-MPS charters; 6th of 8 City charters
- 2013-14 Reading 8.8%—17th of 19 non-MPS charters; 6th of 8 City charters

## **Students**

- 2013-14: 98% Black non-Hispanic; 99% Economically Disadvantaged; 11% Special Education
- 2013-14: 22% of students who finished the previous year and were eligible to return did not return in the fall
- 2013-14: 13% of students who started in September 2013 withdrew before the end of the school year
- 2013-14: 71 students were suspended at least once (24% of all students during the year)

## **Staff**

- Of 14 classroom teachers to start in September 2013, 7 remained the entire year. Of the 7 vacancies, 2 were refilled during the year and 5 were left unfilled. Also, 2 out of 4 'other instructional staff' remained the entire year.
- At the end of the 2013-14 year, three teachers did not have a DPI license.
- In interviews with Charter School Review Committee consultant, teachers noted a "lack of concrete disciplinary policies," "lack of instructional support, coaching and teacher accountability," and "minimal communication and involvement with parents."

Prepared for Schools and Communities United by Jack Norman (jacknorman100@gmail.com). Sources: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; City of Milwaukee; school web sites, IRS form 990.