

Resolution 1415R-003

By Directors Tatiana Joseph and Larry Miller

WHEREAS, The Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) is experiencing a growing enrollment of students whose first language is not English, with these students now approximating one third of the district's enrollment, and there is substantial evidence that this trend will continue; and

WHEREAS, This reality provides both a challenge and an opportunity for all students and adults in MPS and the Milwaukee community, as we are becoming more language-diverse and multicultural in a world in which this is the norm; and

WHEREAS, The great majority of this demographic growth in MPS is among Latino students, while the Latino community is also the largest ethnic minority group in the United States and is becoming one of the largest such groups in Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, Most research and social experts agree that, in addition to English, Spanish is and will continue to be a primary language in this country, and its use and influence are a major force in the world; and

WHEREAS, It is socially, culturally, and economically necessary that public education promotes the learning of English while equally embracing the development of Spanish and supporting the learning of other languages, when appropriate; and

WHEREAS, AS students must also be well prepared for effective participation in societies and economies connected to each other by global imperatives, governments and public school districts must find ways to invest in education and future generations; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee must rebrand itself as a city that nurtures and grows individuals to become effective learners who are highly aware and respectful of cultural diversity and who are bilingual or multilingual; and

WHEREAS, The school district's bilingual-maintenance, dual-language, language-immersion, and multicultural programs are already successful initiatives that move MPS closer to such goals; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That MPS shall establish a target zone that promotes bilingualism by first establishing an English/Spanish and other languages bilingual and dual-language program in Milwaukee's near southside in Board District 6 and then, within a reasonable number of years, at the city-wide level until MPS becomes a school district in which students will graduate academically well prepared in English, Spanish, and/or be conversant in another language; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That all plans for the implementation of this initiative shall fully engage parents, community, and individuals and groups with bilingual education expertise; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Milwaukee Public Schools shall draw on its bilingual curricular expertise and other external experts in the field to continue and to expand the implementation of this program and shall further facilitate the learning of other languages, with all language-based programs that promote bilingualism to be sustained, to be further improved and developed, and to be made more accessible to all; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That all screening and assessment instruments for students in dual-language and bilingual-maintenance programs shall be developed and/or acquired and implemented by the MPS assessment department in consultation with the Assessment Committee recently formed by the Administration, which shall include key bilingual stakeholders; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That MPS shall consult with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for consistency with its policies regarding tests and other accountability measures; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That appropriate professional development, parent engagement, marketing and other informational initiatives shall be instituted to inform the Milwaukee community and the media of this unique initiative that will promote Milwaukee as an innovative center for education in today's diverse and global world; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That MPS must engage in partnerships with area colleges and other entities to institute programs that will provide appropriate credentialing and professional development in Spanish/English dual-language and bilingual-maintenance programs and other languages as necessary; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That MPS will increase its hiring of bilingual certified staff in each school with an English/Spanish and other languages dual-language and/or bilingual-maintenance program, as well as increase the number of bilingual English/Spanish and other language administrators in Central Services. MPS shall also hire an adequate number of bilingual counseling and bilingual special education staff; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That MPS shall create through the Bilingual Advisory Committee the necessary working committees to implement this initiative, which committees shall include teachers, other school-based staff, parents, and students and shall be district-wide; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Administration immediately shall begin to engage board members, schools, higher-education institutions, businesses, staff, the MTEA, parents, the community, and bilingual experts in the development of this initiative; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That MPS shall consider the fiscal implications to implement the purpose of this resolution.

April 24, 2014