



**MILWAUKEE  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



## Superintendent's Report – May

The Superintendent's Report is designed to provide the Milwaukee Board of School Directors and the MPS community with an update on current activities underway to support the district goals of academic achievement; student, family and community engagement; and effective and efficient operations as they are aligned to the district's strategic objectives and the Five Priorities for Success:



## EVENTS/PROGRAMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MPS announces \$25,000 in fab lab grants for two high schools

Milwaukee Public Schools announced a \$25,000 grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to expand its fabrication laboratory (fab lab) program. MPS is among 22 districts selected to receive funds from a total of 63 districts that applied. Fab labs in MPS schools give students access to high-tech tools and processes that are in growing demand in the manufacturing industry.

A ceremony at Bay View High School formally announced the award and celebrated Fab Lab Day in Wisconsin.

Dignitaries in attendance were Mark Hogan, WEDC Secretary and CEO; Johannes Britz, Provost, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; and Johannes Britz, Provost, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.



Bay View High School and Obama School of Career & Technical Education (SCTE) both have a strong focus on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); high-tech, hands-on learning is an essential part of students'

experiences. Existing fab labs in these schools are providing valuable training that will boost students' college and career options.

At **Bay View High School**, proposed use of the grant will allow acquisition of a laser engraver, 3D printer, and other equipment. At **Obama SCTE**, a new CNC plasma cutter and 3D printer are being considered to help manufacturing and robotics students gain real world experience by taking their ideas from design to production.

## MPS students celebrate cultures around the world

Milwaukee Public Schools students are expanding their understanding and knowledge of global cultures and ways that interrelationships affect our world through a United Nations Schools of International Learning program. MPS elementary and middle school students presented a special program to celebrate cultures and identify the challenges facing countries around the world at Miller Park

Classes have been working all year on their projects. Exhibits included photos, maps, and important facts about each

country, as well as strengths and challenges and the role each country plays in its region or continent. Student performances included Hmong dancers, Latin American themed ballroom dancers, and an international fashion show.

The UNSIL curriculum is currently implemented at thirteen Milwaukee Public Schools: **Academy of Accelerated Learning, Bethune Academy, Burbank School, Garland School, Humboldt Park School, Milwaukee Academy of Chinese Language, Parkview School, Marvin E. Pratt School, Story School, Gilbert Stuart School, Victory Italian Immersion School, U.S. Grant School, and Zablocki School.**

**TURNAROUND ARTS:**  
**MILWAUKEE**  
creating success in schools  
A PROGRAM OF THE KENNEDY CENTER



## MPS group gets standing ovation in national talent show

After many weeks of practice and preparation, a group of 12 MPS students traveled to Washington, D.C. to take part in the Turnaround Arts national talent show held at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Their performance honoring Frederick Douglass drew cheers and a standing ovation from the audience.

The journey began in fall with the composition of an original musical piece. **Ja'Rahn Leveston**, a teacher from **Roosevelt Middle School of the Arts**, created and submitted his piece, called "200" in celebration of the 200th birthday of Frederick Douglass. The song is written in the style of the hit musical *Hamilton*. After receiving the exciting news that the piece was accepted into the talent show, auditions were begun to select 12 students from the four MPS Turnaround Arts schools – **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. African American Immersion School; Lancaster School; Roosevelt Middle School of the Arts;** and **Sherman Multicultural Arts.**

In addition to the talent show at the Kennedy Center, students



performed three times while in Washington –the first being flash mob-style at the airport. The group also performed at Frederick Douglass’ home and by request at the Bus Boys and Poets restaurant with other groups from the talent show.

Turnaround Arts was initiated by the Obama Administration and provides arts support in high-need schools. It offers innovative arts, dance, theater and music programs; arts integration across subject areas; arts resources; musical instruments; and high-profile artist mentors. Turnaround Arts has improved attendance, math scores, and reading scores, and has decreased suspensions across participating schools nationwide.



## Milwaukee Recreation to renovate 52 playfields

The Milwaukee Public Schools Department of Recreation and Community Services (Milwaukee Recreation) launched its initiative to renovate and modernize 52 playfields around the city. With the help of local organizations, the business community, and residents, the goal is to level the playing field and transform neighborhood playfields, many of which were built in the 1920s and 1930s and have not been refurbished since their inception.



In 2014, Milwaukee Recreation retained a consultant to conduct a review of the existing facilities and provide a roadmap for improvements to the playfields spanning a 10-year timeframe. The result was the Milwaukee Outdoor Recreation [Facilities Master Plan](#).

The plan rated 65 percent of the facilities as fair to poor, and identified more than \$25 million in needed improvements over a 10-year span. However, in lieu of merely assessing the condition of each site, Milwaukee Recreation also analyzed the neighborhood and population characteristics surrounding each playfield and developed a priority list of projects that emphasized racial and economic equity.

The four playfields to undergo the first round of construction include **Burnham Playfield**, **Columbia Playfield**, **Custer Playfield**, and **Southgate Playfield**.

While each project will be designed to meet the needs and interests of the surrounding community, most of the work will include asphalt removal, installation of shade trees, walking areas, improved playground equipment, and basketball courts. Additional lighting, benches, shade structures, and trash receptacles will also be added to the sites, and several locations will include eco-friendly splash pads.



Milwaukee Recreation looks to break ground at Columbia, Custer, and Southgate this fall, with Burnham soon to follow in 2019. Milwaukee Recreation will also break ground on a new athletic stadium at Vincent High School, which will eventually join the two other multi-use stadiums – Custer and South – that were also built within the last few years. The new Vincent Stadium will provide student-athletes with the ideal venue within which to compete, as well as the opportunity to host WIAA tournaments for football, soccer, and track.

Updating each playfield is the immediate goal for Milwaukee Recreation, but the ultimate objective is to bring the community together through memorable recreational and educational experiences for people of all ages.

*Collectively, MPS has already committed \$11 million towards the improvement of play spaces and athletic facilities, but we cannot do it alone. Please see our donation card for opportunities to get involved in this work and be part of an investment that matters.*

## MPS STEM Fair celebrates science and technology

The 11th annual MPS STEM Fair took place at Miller Park with more than 500 students from 48 MPS schools participating. Over the years, the STEM fair has transformed to include not only traditional science fair projects, but also engineering design projects that allow students to solve real-life problems. Participating in the STEM Fair allows students to show off the STEM knowledge they have gained both in their school and in the community.



This year, the STEM Fair held a button design contest to celebrate the Year of the Arts. During the fair, student participants wore the winning button (shown), designed by 12th-grader **Meng Thao** from **South Division High School**.



More than 225 volunteers from the community attended the fair to support students by judging, providing interactive STEM activities for students, and assisting with operations of the fair.



## AWARDS/RECOGNITION

### Kirstyn Walker of MPS is Fulbright awardee



**Kirstyn Walker**, a teacher at **James Groppi High School**, is the recipient of an English Teaching Assistantship from the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. Kirstyn teaches 10th and 11th grade English at Groppi and will earn a master's degree in education policy this spring from Marquette University. Her assistantship will allow her to spend the upcoming academic year teaching English in Greece.

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program competition aims to increase mutual understanding among nations through educational and cultural exchange while serving as a catalyst for long-term leadership development.

The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government. Recipients of Fulbright grants are selected on the basis of academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields. The program operates in more than 160 countries worldwide.

### Riverside Robotigers qualify for FIRST Robotics championships in Detroit

The Riverside University High School Robotigers reached the finals of their regional competition. The group competed in La Crosse in early April and their impressive win qualified them for the FIRST Robotics Championship in Detroit.

The students who make up the Robotigers represent several MPS high schools. About half the team members are girls—an unusually high ratio in the robotics world. The students are the designers, fabricators, mechanics, and operators of their robot. With support from local businesses, teachers, alumni, and mentors, the students of Riverside Robotics have created a nationally competitive robot. This is the second consecutive year the Robotigers have made it to national championships.



**MPS students honored for Women’s History essays**

To honor Women’s History Month, MPS students were invited to submit essays sharing the stories of Wisconsin women. Winners received cash awards and certificates and were announced at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Hefter Conference Center.



The contest is designed to shine a light on the lives of Wisconsin women, who have often remained invisible. The purpose of the essays is to explore the public roles and private lives of women and to expand the historical record. The contest rules encourage students to interview or communicate with their subjects, when possible, to uncover new information and acquire new perspectives.

High school	
<b>First Place</b>	Gepsaida Fernandez Golda Meir High School
<b>Second Place</b>	Quincy Noakes Golda Meir High School
<b>Third Place</b>	Jazlyn Molton Golda Meir High School

Middle school	
<b>First Place</b>	Cloey Knapp Fernwood Montessori School
<b>Second Place</b>	Nicole Sarenac Fernwood Montessori School
<b>Third Place</b>	Awarded to students from Erin Sivek’s class at the International Newcomer Center in the Milwaukee Academy of Chinese Language: Aisha Ramzan Ali, Jamilah Abu Bakar, Saidah Dolah, Asma Osman, Moo Ah Tier, Putri Muhammad Ali, Tuwahidah Muhammad Ali, Nur Khadijah Abdul Gafur, and Suhur Hassen. Students wrote about their mothers’ incredible journeys to America and becoming Wisconsin women.

**2017–18 Wisconsin Title I Schools of Recognition**

These schools receive federal Title I funding to provide services to high numbers or high percentages of economically disadvantaged families. Title I Schools of Recognition awards recognize the efforts of students, their families, teachers, school administrators, and school staff members to break the link between poverty and low academic achievement.



<b>High-Achieving &amp; High-Progress School</b>
Whittier Elementary School
<b>High-Achieving School</b>
Whittier Elementary School
<b>High-Progress Schools</b>
Milwaukee College Preparatory School – 38th Street
Milwaukee College Preparatory School – Lloyd Street
Whittier Elementary School
<b>Beating the Odds Schools</b>
Academy of Accelerated Learning
Honey Creek Continuous Progress School
Rufus King International School
Golda Meir School
Milwaukee Spanish Immersion School
Wedgewood Park International School

## Celebrating Bilingual Education

The Wisconsin Association for Bilingual Education (WIABE) recognized 12 Milwaukee Public Schools teachers as 2018 WIABE Educators of the Year and honored two MPS students as writing contest winners.

WIABE supports and encourages the implementation of educational policies and effective bilingual-bicultural programs that promote equal education opportunity and excellence for all language minority students. The group promotes enrichment forms of bilingual education to ensure that language minority students are successful academically and develop age-appropriate English proficiency, while at the same time maintaining a sense of pride in culture and diversity.

MPS educators recognized include:

**Lisa Bence**, Kagel Bilingual School  
**Eli Jorge**, South Division High School  
**Luz Martinez**, J.W. Riley Bilingual School  
**Magdiel Perez**, La Causa Charter School  
**Shannon Reed**, Lincoln Ave. Bilingual School  
**Elizabeth Rivera**, Hayes Bilingual School  
**Carlos Rodriguez**, Escuela Vieau  
**Elizabeth Rodriguez**, Wedgewood Park International

**Maricarmen Rodriguez**, Forest Home Ave. School  
**Annemarie Schaff**, Kagel Bilingual School  
**Evelyn Velazquez**, Greenfield Bilingual School  
**Carrie Yanko**, Allen-Field Bilingual School

Student writing contest winners:

**Afnan Al Shargabi**, a 7th grader at Morgandale School  
**Kiara Serpa**, a junior at South Division



## MPS students recognized for excellence in German language study

Middle and high school students from **Milwaukee School of Languages (MSL)** received recognition from the German Language and School Society (DSSV) for exemplary academic achievement. Students studying German took the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) National German Exam and participated in the DSSV writing contest, and 38 students qualified for a variety of awards. MSL had more student winners than any other participating school.

Six MSL students received major awards.

**Greta Garcia Jalil-Melendez**: Fritz & Maria Keller Memorial Award of \$1,000  
**Anja Arnhold**: Wilma Giese Award of \$1,000  
**Martina Osterman**: DSSV Award of \$1,000  
**Emily Schwab**: DSSV Award of \$1,000  
**Alex Robinson**: \$250  
**Craig Robinson**: \$250

Additional students who earned recognition for their achievements were **Catherine Charnon, Nick Charnon, Merce Fernandez, Raquel Fernandez, Henry Finch, Sam Gende, Angelina Hamburger, Serenity Heuangpathoumthong, Brianna Hoey, Ian Hunt, Mary Jane Juern, Brynne Kehoe, Iyonna Luttrell, Abdullah Masri, Brody Obermeier, Garrett Pfaff, Stephanie Piontkowski, Ian Rasmussen, Stella Richards, Isabella Rock, Katherine Roecklein, Hannah Rudak, Emma Sachs, Hayley Servant, Brandon Smith, Francesca Smith, Regan Weeks, Rheanna Weeks, Peyton Weiss, Autumn Wolfe, Mira Zakula, and Rade Zakula.**



**MPS musicians receive top honors**

The Wisconsin School Music Association’s annual Solo & Ensemble Festivals are the highlight of the year for student musicians. At the district level, student vocalists and instrumentalists strive to advance to the state level.



This year, a total of 12 solos and ensembles were named Exemplary Performances by judges at the state level. See chart to the right.

A standout among these honorees is Natalija Walker, who earned exemplary recognition four years in a row for her vocal solo.



<b>Milwaukee High School of the Arts</b>
Vocal Jazz Ensemble
<b>Ronald Reagan High School</b>
Lauren Barta – Alto Vocal Solo Casimir Riley – Eflat Baritone Saxophone Solo Kaitlyn Ryan – Trumpet Solo Alexander Walker – Broadway Vocal Solo Natalija Walker – Soprano Vocal Solo Madrigal Vocal Ensemble
<b>Riverside University High School</b>
Ty’ Johnna Gardner - Broadway Vocal Solo Morgan Kruger - Soprano Vocal Solo
<b>Rufus King IB High School</b>
Mystique Evans – Cello Solo Maya Grosser and Josue Koenig – Violin Duet Emma Shenkenberg – Oboe Solo

**Four MPS schools continue to make list of top schools in the state**

Four MPS high schools are celebrating the release of the *U.S. News and World Report* list of top high schools. Rufus King International High School is the top-rated Milwaukee school on the list, being ranked 9th in the state and also earning a Silver Medal as a high-performing school. Silver Medals also went to Milwaukee School of Languages, ranked 15th, and Ronald Wilson Reagan College Preparatory High School, ranked 23rd.



*U.S. News and World Report* annually determines its rankings based on graduation rates, number of Advanced Placement classes offered, college readiness, test scores, and other factors. The four MPS schools making this prestigious list, which includes national recognition, are:

<b>Rufus King International High School</b> Ranked #9 in Wisconsin
<b>Milwaukee School of Languages</b> Ranked #15 in Wisconsin
<b>Ronald Wilson Reagan College Preparatory High School</b> Ranked #23 in Wisconsin
<b>Hmong American Peace Academy K3–12 (HAPA)</b> Ranked #107 in Wisconsin

In the past, each of these four schools has made the *U.S. News and World Report* list, *The Washington Post* list of most challenging schools, or both.



### Three MPS students earn top prize at SkillsUSA state championships

Twenty-three MPS students from **Bradley Technology and Trade School** and **Barack Obama SCTE** competed in the annual SkillsUSA State Championships. Eight medals signifying five awards including two state championships were awarded to these talented middle and high school students.



From Obama, high school coaches **Dave Kontz** and **Dan Johnston** and middle school coach Monica Hall led their team of six students to capture four awards. In addition, Marvell Reed was elected as a state officer for District 5 and will serve as vice president.

<b>1st Place</b>	Robotics and Automation	<b>Devyon Bowie, Romero Williams</b>
<b>1st Place</b>	CO2 Dragster (Middle School)	<b>Enrique Acevedo</b>
<b>2nd Place</b>	CO2 Dragster (High School)	<b>Romero Williams</b>
<b>3rd Place</b>	Barber/Cosmetology	<b>Temonie Kirk</b>

Also earning the right to compete at the state level were high school students **Saria Vaughn** and **Jhnelisha Conrod**, both entered in the categories of Job Interview and Cosmetology. At the middle school level, competitors included **Nyasha Simpson** and **Mekhi Murphy** (Team Engineering and CO2 Dragster), **Adam Washington** (Team Engineering), **Naima Galarza** and **Azarria Martin** (Job Demonstration), and **Annika Burton** (Job Interview). Enrique Acevedo's first place finish was his second state championship in a row.

In June, Obama Coach Dave Kontz and new Vice President Marvell Reed will accompany Devyon Bowie and Romero Williams to the National SkillsUSA Championships in Louisville, Kentucky.

From **Bradley Tech**, Coaches **Jeff Lemmer** and Sharon Hegwood led a team of ten students to the state competition. One of their groups earned a second-place medal despite being only their second year of participation in SkillsUSA. Their category, Promotional Bulletin Board, required students to design and build a board to promote their SkillsUSA chapter.

<b>Wisconsin SkillsUSA Winners, Bradley Tech</b>		
<b>2nd Place</b>	Promotional Bulletin Board	<b>Karina Damian Ibrahim Abukar Donyana Johnson</b>

The team included **Malyun Ali** (Job Interview), **Giovanni Perez** (Team Engineering and Woodworking Display), **Nick Rufus** (Job Interview and Team Engineering), **Mariah Erby** and **Dillion Bickel-Parrett** (Web Design), **Ibrahim Abukar** and **Karina Damian** (Advertising Design and Promotional Bulletin Board), **Aaliyah Flournoy** (CO2 Dragster and Woodworking Display), **Abdikadir Ahmed** (Team Engineering), and **Donyana Johnson** (Job Interview and Promotional Bulletin Board).

