



**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



Superintendent’s Report – February 2020

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.



SCHOOL VISITS

School visits remain a priority and serve as an excellent mechanism for gathering feedback to support district improvement efforts. This month, I had the opportunity to visit Milwaukee High School of the Arts, North Division High School, MacDowell Montessori, and Milwaukee German Immersion School.

MPS Observes National Black Lives Matter Week of Action

The Milwaukee community had opportunities to listen, learn, and add their voices to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) narrative to bring about positive change. Leading off Black History Month, the National Black Lives Matter Week of Action, February 3–7, was designed to engage the community in topics that address four national demands and foster discussions and solutions to current issues.

The National Demands of the Week of Action are:

- End zero tolerance
- Mandate Black History and ethnic studies course
- Hire more Black teachers
- Fund counselors, not cops

Milwaukee Public Schools and its partners—United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County, Leaders Igniting Transformation (LIT), Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH),

Milwaukee Metropolitan Alliance of Black School Educators (MMABSE), Milwaukee Teachers Education Association (MTEA), MTEA Black Educators Caucus, Showing up for Racial Justice (SURJ), and the MPS Department of Black & Latino Male Achievement—hosted public events focused on the national demands and BLM principles.

Below is an overview of the events that took place during Black Lives Matter Week of Action:

- February 3: Student-Led Discussion and Live Broadcast
- February 4: *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in School* – Movie Screening and Talk-Back
- February 5: Black Lives Matter Poetry Open Mic Night
- February 6: Intergenerational Snack and Kick-Back Night – Games and Conversations
- February 7: Black Lives Matter: A Storytelling Social and Awards Night



These daily events were designed to promote exploration and discussion of important topics.

MPS Students Showcase Black Lives Matter Projects

February has been a busy month in Milwaukee Public Schools as students have spent time researching, designing, and showcasing projects celebrating Black History Month. During the first week of February, the district recognized the national Black Lives Matter in School Week of Action with public events and classroom activities.

Maple Tree School held an exciting, interactive event attended by parents and [filmed by TMJ4](#). Students researched famous Black Americans, then stepped into their roles by portraying their subjects as figures in a wax museum. Visitors could press a button to make students come to life and tell the stories of their chosen historic figures. Students learned about the accomplishments of their subjects and also about the struggles and challenges they overcame on the road to success.



At Fernwood Montessori, younger students studied Black inventors and explored the many devices that have changed our world and improved our lives, including electronics, computer parts, cosmetics, the red-yellow-green stop light, and peanut butter. Older students researched Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and collaborated to create a large banner with messages about peace and justice.

Students at Curtin Leadership Academy explored the lives of a variety of Black Americans and discussed the impact of their contributions on daily life. They hosted an event for families and the community to view their work, ask questions, and enjoy a lengthy timeline highlighting the impact of Black Americans throughout history.

Forest Home Avenue School welcomed players from the Marquette University men's basketball team, who read to third graders and talked about their personal journeys through school that led them to Marquette. Students were inspired to ask many excellent questions about college and playing sports at a high level.

Teachers at Bethune Academy served as role models for their students by proudly wearing their college t-shirts representing historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). They shared their college experiences with students and encouraged them to follow their dreams to college and career.

National School Counseling Week

Ask a school counselor about a typical day, and they will tell you every day is unique, just as every student is unique. Each day, school counselors show their patience, respect, caring, negotiation skills, and an ability to support students through triumph and tragedy. School counselors promote success by seeing each child for his or her own needs and taking steps to meet those needs, whether a new backpack or comfort after the loss of a loved one.

National School Counseling Week, sponsored by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), took place February 3–7, 2020. This was an opportunity to focus public attention on the unique contributions of professional school counselors in helping students achieve in school and plan for a career.



During a typical school year, counselors are actively engaged in working with parents to understand a child's personal situation; in focusing on positive ways to enhance students' social/personal, educational and career development; and in working with teachers and other educators so students can realize their potential and set healthy aspirations for themselves. The training and experience of school counselors makes them an integral part of the total education program.

MPS is appreciative of the work being done every day by school counselors to help students achieve in school and support their personal well-being. Thank you, counselors!

Students Prepare to Renovate Historic Eagleknit Building

A group of sophomores and juniors from Lynde and Harry Bradley Technology and Trade School are embarking on a historic project that will help students gain valuable job skills in the construction trades. Wangard Partners is committed to providing on-the-job training for a group of students who will help convert the 91-year-old Eagleknit building from manufacturing into modern office space.

Career and technical education is a major focus in Milwaukee Public Schools, especially at Bradley Tech, where construction, welding, manufacturing, engineering, and design are part of the curriculum. MPS has developed strong relationships with partners such as Wangard in high-demand job areas. Students gain advanced training in careers before graduation, and employers who train students help build a pipeline of skilled youth who are ready to work.



The Eagle Knitting Mills building, now known as Eagleknit, was constructed in 1928 and features cream city brick, wood floors, large steel windows, and concrete columns. Many of the design elements will be retained to keep the historic atmosphere of the structure. A new 30,000-square-foot expansion is also planned. The Eagleknit Building is located at 507 S. 2nd Street in the Walker's Point neighborhood of Milwaukee.

Partners in the renovation project include J.H. Findorff & Son Inc., the project's building contractor, and the Building2Learn Consortium, a nonprofit focused on introducing students to careers in skilled trades. Mentors and classroom coaches have also been provided by Lemberg Electric Company, Inc., All Hands Boatworks, Gensler Architecture, and Southeastern Carpenters Regional Council.

When completed, the Eagleknit Innovation Hub will be home to Building2Learn, IC Stars—a nonprofit focused on training young adults for technology careers—and other tenants.

Lincoln Avenue Receives City Grant to Improve Safety

With more than 500 students coming to school every day, safety is a top concern at Lincoln Avenue School. To enhance safety for students who walk to school, Lincoln was recently selected for the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) initiative by the City of Milwaukee. Of the 159 schools in MPS, Lincoln has the fourth largest number of students who walk each day. Many students live within one mile, which means they are not eligible for bus transportation.

Lincoln has been proactive about ensuring that students arrive at school safely. For more than two years, parents and volunteers have organized walking school buses to help students reach school safely. Two days per week, an adult walks to school, picking up children along a preset route so students can walk as a group with a volunteer chaperone. The walking school bus program helps children watch traffic, cross streets safely, and avoid the risks of walking alone or taking secluded shortcuts. Lincoln's attention to student safety was a factor in being selected for the Safe Routes to School grant.



Safe Routes to School is an international movement meant to improve safety conditions along routes to school and encourage walking and bicycling. The City of Milwaukee is developing a citywide SRTS policy plan expected to be finalized in 2020. Having received a federal grant to create street improvements around eight schools, the City held the first public workshop for Lincoln on January 14, 2020. Input was gathered from Lincoln families, staff, concerned community members, and local police officers about areas of concern and ways to correct infrastructure. The city will present design ideas at a future community meeting, attendees will vote on options, and improvements totaling \$75,000 will be implemented in 2021.

MPS Kindergarten Enrollment Fair a Success

MPS hosted its annual Kindergarten Enrollment Fair on February 1, 2020 at Milwaukee High School of the Arts. The Fair was successful in helping families explore schools, make choices, and enroll students for fall 2020.

All MPS schools that offer Head Start and kindergarten were present to answer questions from families and help them identify the best options for their children. Families were able to speak directly with school staff and get help filling out enrollment forms. Parents were encouraged to bring their children to the fair so they could begin experiencing a school setting and are ready to attend in fall.



MPS kindergarten enrollment is open through March 1, 2020. For more information on enrollment, call MPS schools, call the district enrollment office at (414) 475-8448, or visit mpsmke.com/enroll. Families can register online, at any MPS school, or at MPS Central Services, 5225 W. Vliet Street.

Congratulations to MPS 2020 Winter Graduates

Milwaukee Public Schools honored 56 students who completed graduation requirements during the fall semester and earned the right to wear a cap and gown. The auditorium at South Division High School was filled with proud parents, families, and friends who cheered for graduates as they crossed the stage. Even a light snowfall could not discourage the excitement of the graduates and their supporters.

Students wore their own school colors and created a rainbow of gowns that represented nearly every high school in the district. Along with diplomas, every graduate was presented with an MPS Alumni pin representing their membership in the MPS Forever Family. Graduates are encouraged to stay connected with their schools as they advance through their careers.



MPS is proud to send these students on their personal journeys ready for college and career!

Milwaukee Teens Earn More Than \$5 Million in Scholarships at Empower Me Tour

The results are in! Milwaukee high school seniors earned 142 scholarships valued at \$5,294,800 during the Fall 2019 Empower Me Tour (EMT), hosted by the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). More than 1,200 Milwaukee high school seniors and parents filled the Wisconsin Center in September to take part in the event. EMT is a free, traveling college-and-career-readiness roadshow that provides a platform for high school students to earn on-site scholarships and admission to the nation's top historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The EMT also resulted in 390 students receiving acceptance letters to participating universities.

Thanks to UNCF, MPS alum and Riverside University High School graduate Derell Garth graduated from Clark Atlanta University (CAU) in 2018. CAU was Garth's dream school, but paying for it was a big challenge. After visiting his financial aid office, he applied for and won the First Generation Coca Cola Scholarship and the Toyota Scholarship, which covered the cost of all four years in college. "The scholarships allowed me to turn my dreams into reality by helping me pay for school and allowing me

to become the first ever in my family to graduate from college,” he said. Since graduating, Garth has returned home to Milwaukee and works for Northwestern Mutual.

UNCF is the largest scholarship provider to students of color, awarding \$100 million annually in scholarships to more than 10,000 students across the country. Through partnerships with Milwaukee Public Schools; parents; national sponsors Wells Fargo, Target, P&G, Disney, and FedEx; and a host of strong local sponsors, EMT offers access to information and recruiters from HBCUs, college prep workshops, dynamic presenters, and award-winning education experts. Students took advantage of on-the-spot opportunities to apply for college admission, financial aid, and scholarships including the EMT Merit Scholarship.



King Cheer Team Proves Resilience in Return to State Tournament

On Saturday, February 1, the Rufus King varsity cheer team finished second in the Game Day division at the Brookfield Blast Cheerleading competition. Over 40 schools competed at Brookfield Central High School. King, a first-time competitor in the Game Day division, put together a routine that was not only recognized by the Universal Cheer Association judges on hand, but also earned the Generals an invite to the 2021 UCA Nationals Cheer competition.

In the meantime, King will take their talents to the WACPC State Tournament on February 21-22 in Watertown, Wisconsin. King has now qualified for 10 straight state tournaments, including a fourth-place finish in the Cheer Dance division at state last year. King took first in the Cheer Dance division in both 2016 and 2017. King will join **18 other schools** from around Wisconsin in the 2020 Cheer Dance division.



The King Cheer team is truly a family environment. The entire coaching staff consists of King alums, including Bohannon, assistant coach Robin Anderson, junior varsity coach Jamisha Gladney, and junior varsity assistant coach Ryonna Hendricks. By establishing a blue and gold pipeline from the mat to the sidelines, King Cheer has been able to build on its past successes.

Congratulations to the 2019-20 King Cheer squad, and good luck at the state tournament!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Students Encouraged to Apply for PEOPLE Program to Prepare for UW-Madison

The University of Wisconsin–Madison’s Precollege Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence, known as PEOPLE, is now accepting applications for fall 2020. MPS eighth-grade students should apply to take part in this program through all four years of high school. The PEOPLE application is open from January 28 through March 6, 2020.

PEOPLE started 20 years ago with 66 high school students from Milwaukee. It has graduated 526 students, of which 253 attended Milwaukee Public Schools. The PEOPLE journey prepares first-generation and low-income students to be ready for college, apply for admission, and enroll at UW System institutions, with an emphasis on UW–Madison.



Upon enrollment in this program, each student is assigned a precollege advisor and receives support through all four years of high school. Students also get help with the college application process. Those who are accepted at UW–Madison may be eligible for a four-year tuition scholarship and support services from the PEOPLE College Scholars Program.

To find out more, visit the [PEOPLE website](#), [watch a short video](#), or download an [event flyer](#) or [information flyer](#).

Questions can be emailed to people@cdo.wisc.edu

MPS Student Job Fair is March 11, 2020

Getting a first job is a huge step in the life of a teenager. To help students explore jobs, meet hiring managers, and succeed in the world of work, Milwaukee Public Schools will host its third annual Job Fair on March 11, 2020. Approximately 800 students are expected to attend in search of summer and year-round work. Employers are invited to register for the fair, which will take place from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee Student Union.

Following the first job fair in 2018, MPS received an overwhelming response from employers, who hired hundreds of students and begged for the job fair to become an annual event. Space has been expanded to include more employers and provide more options for students.

In addition to searching for immediate jobs, students have the chance to explore new fields that may lead to lifelong careers including automotive, construction, health care, law enforcement, manufacturing, and more.

Employers should sign up now to meet our enthusiastic, motivated students. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2020-mps-student-job-fair-registration-84653540017>

Space at the job fair is free and includes one parking spot and a light lunch for two people. An area will be available for on-site interviews. For questions and registration information, contact Tamera Coleman at employMPSstudents@milwaukee.k12.wi.us

Students who completed a Work Readiness session at their school are eligible to attend the job fair. Work Readiness sessions help prepare students to fill out job applications, interview, and be ready for the world of work. Students can speak with their counselor or stop in any College and Career Center with questions and to receive a permission slip. Bus transportation will be provided for students to attend the job fair.

