



## **Report of the Office of Board Governance**

**Dr. Tina Owen-Moore – March 2025**

The Office of Board Governance (OBG) submits, with grateful appreciation for all those contributing to its efforts, the following report on OBG activities in February.

### **Superintendent Onboarding**

This month, we welcomed Dr. Brenda Cassellius to the Milwaukee Public Schools. On behalf of the Board, our team has been working in collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent to ensure our new superintendent has the information, connections and training she needs to be successful.

### **What Does the School Board Do?**

In case you didn't hear it, this month, Chief Officer, Dr. Tina Owen-Moore and outgoing Board member, Director Henry Leonard, spoke with WUWM reporter, Katie Kokal, about the role of the elected school board member. This was in anticipation of the April 1<sup>st</sup> election of school board members. You can listen to it [here](#).

### **School and Community Visits & Events**

Our team enjoyed participating in school and community visits and activities with several Board members this month. We started the month by attending the Mayor's State of the City Address. It was nice to see the appreciation given to Mr. Galvan for his service to the community in leading the district this year and to see how the city welcomed Dr. Cassellius with open arms.

This was a month for school visits. From Read Across America activities, to farm visits, superintendent first day activities, and new board member connections, this month we spent a good deal of time in schools. Our office appreciates being able to facilitate connections between board members and schools. If any schools or community groups would like to invite board members to events or activities, they can do so by writing to us at [governance@milwaukee.k12.wi.us](mailto:governance@milwaukee.k12.wi.us). Not only do we help to coordinate schedules, but we also ensure that all public notice laws are followed when a quorum of board members may be present.

### **Board Training**

During March, individual Board members completed the [Board Self-Evaluation process through the Wisconsin Association of School Boards \(WASB\)](#). In April, we plan to host a Board retreat to review the results of that assessment and to plan for our training for the year ahead. We will also use this time to work with the Superintendent on setting goals and aligning our work to the MGT report.

In addition to governance training, our office is scheduling board members to participate in media training this month to better understand the role of the board in communications, how to speak with the media, and the legal requirements for speaking as a board member.

### **Celebrating Our Outgoing Board Members and Welcoming Our New Board Members**

This month, several of our Board members are chairing meetings for the last time. We are so grateful for all their efforts over the past four years, and we are eager to celebrate their

commitment of time, energy and care for Milwaukee Public Schools. Our team is planning to recognize this service in the weeks ahead.

**Outgoing Board Members:**

Director Henry Leonard

Director Marcela “Xela” Garcia

Director Jilly Gokalgandhi

We are also gearing up to train and welcome new board members. We have learned a lot from our board members over the past year about the board’s needs for training and support, and we are aiming to provide our incoming board members with a strong start, the right development and the critical information they need to lead.

**Board Policy and Committee Work**

This month, we worked closely with legal counsel, the Office of Accountability and Efficiency and the Office of the Superintendent to revise policies BG 2.12 and BR 1.18. We also collaborated to develop a charter for an audit committee based on recommendations from the Corrective Action Plan. Language from the charter outlines the purpose of the committee:

Pursuant to action by the Milwaukee Board of School Directors (Board) on January 30, 2025, there is hereby created an Audit Committee, for the purpose of providing the Board with an objective, independent, unbiased, and knowledgeable audit advisory body. The Audit Committee supports Internal Audit operations and advises the Board on both external and internal audit matters.

We continue to meet weekly with representatives from the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), Administration, the Office of Accountability and Efficiency, and our external auditors.

**Additional Policy Work**

The Office of Board Governance brought the first chapter of board policies to the Board for consideration - the chapter on the Board’s bylaws. To get here, first we had to review and compare current policies to Neola’s recommended policies and revise to ensure that the new policies captured all the important guiding policies and principles currently in place. We were also able to bring forward recommendations to improve current policies or add new Neola policies where there were gaps in existing policies.

This week, we collaborated with the Office of the Superintendent to revise the second chapter of the policies – Executive Officers. Given the nuances of MPS governance and leadership, this was a unique chapter to build, and we are excited to be able to share this next chapter with the Board at the next LRP meeting in May.

Thank you for your continued support.

We are honored to support the Board and District leaders through our work.

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**The Office of Board Governance** provides support — in cooperation with, but independent of, the Superintendent and the Chief Accountability Officer — to the Milwaukee Board of School Directors in effectively and efficiently governing the district. This support includes, but is not limited to:

- reviewing and proposing policy;
- conducting fiscal analyses;
- preparing communications for the Board and public;
- fulfilling statutory or other legal requirements;
- preparing meeting notices and agendas for the meetings of the Board and its Committees;
- serving as the Board's secretary, clerk, and parliamentarian; and
- maintaining records of the Board's actions.

The Office provides coordination among the Board, the Office of Accountability and Efficiency, and the Superintendent's office.

The Office, by providing the Board with the most independent information available, assists the Board in its function of establishing district goals, priorities, rules, and policies.