



Superintendent's Report – March

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 eight strategic objectives:



Close the GAP



Re-envision Partnerships



Educate the Whole Child



Strengthen Communication Systems & Outreach Strategies



Redefine the MPS Experience



Develop Our Workforce



Rethink High Schools



Improve Organizational Processes

Meetings from late February through mid-March follow.

Mayor Barrett, Pat Curley, the Mayor's Chief of Staff, President Sain, Gina Spang, John Schlifske, Tim Sheehy, Julia Taylor and I met with Governor Walker. We discussed the biennial budget and shared the areas where we need additional resources.

I attended the *Bring Someone You Love to School* annual event at Lloyd Barbee Montessori School. There were over 300 visitors and its purpose is to strengthen the relationship with families, the community and the school. In the true spirit of a community event, breakfast is a potluck provided by families and school staff.

We had our Year of the Arts (YOTA) update. Some of the highlights of YOTA are the partnership with Summerfest for student musicians; the 2017–18 Logo Contest with the theme *Creativity Takes Courage* (Henri Matisse); the Biennial Arts Festival; Family Art Night; and, school concerts.

I toured the Sojourner Family Peace Center. Sojourner is the largest agency supporting domestic violence victims and is co-located with many other community partners that serve youth/families in the city. I also served as the keynote speaker at Sojourner Peace House's panel series entitled, *Education and Family Violence*.



Vincent Lyles and I discussed the joint approach to Herb Kohl charities; the SPARK proposal; North Division; and, how we can work together on the Urban Task Force recommendations.

I hosted Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch on a tour of Milwaukee Parkside School of the Arts. The Lt. Governor spoke to the fourth through eighth graders on government and leadership.



Ed Lump, President and CEO, Wisconsin Restaurant Association, Susan Quam, Executive Vice President, Wisconsin Restaurant Association, and, Connie Fedor Executive Director of Education Foundation of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association, along with Jennifer Bartolotta toured Bay View High School's Culinary Arts program.

I participated in the MPS Foundation Board of Directors meeting. The board received updates from the various committees, including Finance, Allocations and Fund Development; Ann Terrell presented her director's report and I provided a district update.

Aurora Health Care and Milwaukee Public Schools hosted a conversation on building the talent pipeline in healthcare, beginning with high school students. We formed the Center for Healthcare Careers of Southeast Wisconsin (CHCSeW) to accomplish this goal. During this conversation, we discussed the health science programs at Hamilton, Madison, North Division and South Division high schools.

My Senior Team and I attended Mayor Barrett's State of the City address at the Harley-Davidson Conference Center.

I was the keynote speaker at the LGBT Chamber's *Food for Thought*. This is a statewide organization with more than 470 businesses as members. *Food for Thought* is a lunchtime series featuring key community and business leaders discussing a variety of topics with the Chamber's members.

I met with the MATC Board appointment committee. The committee voted unanimously to appoint me to their Board. Dr. Martin believes it is important to have an MPS representative because of all the collaborative work we are doing through the **M³** partnership.

I appeared on Mike Gousha's *On the Issues* series. The topic of discussion was our plans for major reforms, our plans for our lowest performing schools, and chartering authority.

I attended the Council of the Great City Schools' Legislative Advocacy conference in Washington, DC.

The Milwaukee Business Journal hosted a *Skills Gap Table of Experts* panel to discuss ways the education and business community can best alleviate the skills gap in our community. As part of the table of experts, I was eager to inform the community what we are doing with our technical education programs, the youth apprenticeship programs, and our partnerships

Members of my senior team and I had a conference call with associates from Great Minds to discuss the Arnold Foundation grant. It is a comprehensive mathematics curriculum (Eureka Math) coupled with professional development at no cost to the district.

Awards/Recognition/Announcements

Ellie Balotovsky and **Tenley Dugan**, **Golda Meir** students, were winners in the Young Women Inventors Contest. Two inventions — a robot and a phone app to track school buses — earned them top prizes in Every Einstein's Young Women Inventors Contest. **Ellie Balotovsky**, a sixth grader, took home the grand prize, while **Tenley Dugan** earned first place in the sixth grade division. Hosted by the nonprofit Every Einstein, the Young Women Inventors Contest received entries from around the United States including Florida, Boston, New York, and Kansas City. Every Einstein is based in Milwaukee.



Ellie earned a medal, a cash prize of \$200, an award of \$300 for her school to purchase science equipment, and a crystal trophy along with a duplicate trophy for Golda Meir's display case. Tenley received a medal, a cash prize of \$100, and \$150 for the school to purchase science equipment. The grand prize is named for Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin, a woman who completed her college studies at Cambridge in the early 1920s but was not awarded a degree since the university did not award degrees to women until 1948. Payne-Gaposchkin went on to earn a Ph.D. and become a world-renowned astronomer and astrophysicist.

Our **Milwaukee High School of the Arts' Crimson Storm Drumline** took first place at the City Championship. Competition was fierce this year at the Milwaukee Public Schools Drumline City Championship, and a narrow margin determined first and second place. In the end, the MHSA Crimson Storm Drumline upset eleven-time champion Rufus King and took home its first City Championship trophy.



The MHSA drumline was founded less than a year before its first City Championship. In January 2016, MHSA band director Sharie Garcia partnered with professional percussionist Carl Storniolo to direct and coach the team. That spring, the drumline practiced weekly, and when school got underway in fall, rehearsals were held daily. Drumline members were actively involved in drill and choreography.



Rufus King International High School cheerleaders became two-time State Champions at the Wisconsin Association of Cheer/Pom Coaches (WACPC) Cheerleading Championships. Rufus King took first in the 2016 tournament in the Cheer Dance Small division and now dominated in the Cheer Dance Large division. They are coached by Rufus King Alumnae, Veronica Bohannon, Robin Anderson and Jamisha Gladney.

Jana Spence has been selected by WISN-TV as February's *Top Teacher*. Spence has dedicated more than 30 years of her life to working with students who have the greatest needs, beginning her career as a special education teacher. Spence is now providing education services to students whose physical condition requires them to be hospitalized or receive in-home medical care for an extended period of time.

Some of her students become well enough to return to school, but others do not. Yet each receives education support tailored to their individual condition, plus care and concern that extend to their families as well.



More than 200 graduating seniors, 100 teachers and 16 principals have been selected to receive honors and monetary awards this year from the Herb Kohl Foundation. MPS teacher honorees this year are **Mary Laubenheimer** of **Wedgewood Park International School** and **Judith Offenbacher** of **Audubon Middle School**. Principal **Jennifer Doucette** of **Cooper School** is one of only three principals honored in the region, which encompasses the far southeastern lakeshore.

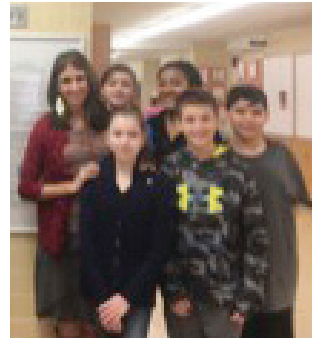
Seven MPS students have been selected as recipients in scholarship categories.

Excellence Scholarships

- ▶ Lucia Burzynski, Rufus King International High School
- ▶ Anna Dannecker, Ronald W. Reagan IB High School

Initiative Scholarships

- ▶ Tasmia Branch, Lad Lake Synergy South
- ▶ Xiomara Lara, Milwaukee Community Cyber High School
- ▶ Guillaume Thompson, Groppi High School
- ▶ Cheng Yang, Hmong American Peace Academy
- ▶ Shyanne Zeungner, Bay View High School



Excellence Scholarship recipients demonstrate academic excellence, high motivation, and a broad range of activity and leadership. Initiative Scholarship recipients demonstrate initiative in school and strong promise for success in college and beyond. Winners in each category receive a \$5,000 scholarship.

Teacher Fellowship recipients are chosen for leadership, service and a superior ability to inspire a love of learning in students. Leadership Award recipients are principals recognized for setting high standards for instruction, achievement and character, and creating a positive school climate. These honors come with a \$3,000 award.

Yer Thao, a student in the vocal music program at **Milwaukee High School of the Arts**, has been selected as a principal singer for the 2017 Kids from Wisconsin show troupe. Hundreds of young people age 15 to 20 auditioned for positions with the group. The newest cast was announced in early March.

She has been an active performer at MHSA in the school's award-winning Vocal Jazz Ensemble, Opera Workshop and Concert Chorale. She is also an active member of the Sophia's Heart music troupe, a local nonprofit community group established by Danny Goeke.



Events/Programs

Milwaukee Public Schools held its **1st Annual Business Symposium** for contractors and vendors at Manpower's World Headquarters. The event was designed to help MPS diversify its contractor and vendor base by exposing more businesses to the district's procurement process and providing information and support. The event was sponsored by the MPS Contract Compliance Services, Facility and Maintenance Services, and Procurement and Risk Management. A series of workshops provided hands-on advice for working with the district, including: understanding the district's contracting process, ways in which companies can grow capacity; and learning how to become a certified business enterprise. There also was a special business matchmaking session to connect businesses providing services with district departments that have historically sought those services.



National Engineering Week was celebrated by approximately 400 MPS students through two activity days sponsored by MPS business partners. Mentors guided students through discussions and hands-on learning through the Engineered2Succeed program. At **North Division High School**, 200 boys in 5th–8th grade met with professional engineers and had the chance to learn how engineering is fundamental to everything from cereal boxes to skyscrapers. The boys learned the physics of freeway interchanges and built bridges and marble rollercoasters. In addition, 200 girls in 5th–8th grade saw the movie *Hidden Figures*, which celebrates the careers of three African-American women who made unprecedented contributions to the U.S. space program in an era when women and blacks faced enormous challenges. Girls met with female engineers, then built and launched air powered rockets.



To promote literacy in children who might not have books at home, MPS partners made free books available to more than 5,000 students in February. The **My Very Own Library (MVOL)** literacy initiative is dedicated to putting books into the hands of children in need. This is the second year of the initiative in Milwaukee.



Children at **Lancaster School** also received a visit from children's author Natasha Tarpley, who read an excerpt from her new book, *The Harlem Charade*, and answered students' questions.



Milwaukee is one of seven communities selected to take part in the MVOL program. Ten Milwaukee Public Schools have been supported by the Feeley Family Foundation, Scholastic Book Fairs, and United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County. An additional contribution from the Zilber Family Foundation allowed the program to add four additional schools: Doerfler Elementary, Longfellow Elementary, Milwaukee College Prep – Lloyd St., and Milwaukee College Prep - Lola Rowe. The program kicked off in December 2015. By the end of the 2016–17 school year, students in these 14 schools will have received 50,000 books for their home libraries.

Over 250 reading volunteers visited thousands of Milwaukee Public Schools students as the district celebrated **Read Across America Day**. Created in 1997, the National Education Association's Read Across America program is a day to celebrate reading and is held annually on March 2, the birthday of beloved children's author Theodor Seuss Geisel. I participated by visiting Vieau, Stars Early Childhood, Kagel, Kilbourn, Keefe, Westside Academy, and Lincoln Center of the Arts.

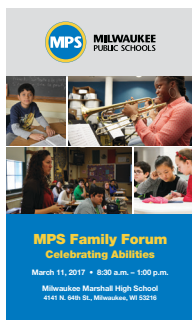


The **Milwaukee Bucks** have teamed up with **MPS** and **Northwestern Mutual Foundation** to bring a healthy

reading competition to students. Through the 30 for 30 reading challenge, the Bucks, MPS and Northwestern Mutual Foundation will encourage students to read 30 minutes a day for 30 days, both as a classroom and individually, throughout the month of March. To launch the reading challenge, Bango and Bucks legend Bob Dandridge visited Ralph H. Metcalfe School, to meet students, discuss the importance of reading and share their love of books. Now in its second year, the reading challenge is a continuation of the

Bucks' partnerships with MPS and Northwestern Mutual Foundation to promote early literacy and teach Milwaukee youth the importance of reading every day.

This year's 30 for 30 reading challenge is open to students at the following MPS schools: Ralph H. Metcalfe School, Carver Academy of Mathematics and Science, Auer Avenue School, Brown Street Academy, Jackson Early Childhood and Elementary School, Clarke Street School, and Forest Home Avenue School. Winners from each school will be chosen in several categories: Most Read, Spirit Winner and Most Improved. These winners will receive tickets for the student and a parent/guardian to attend an upcoming Bucks game at the BMO Harris Bradley Center. Winners of the competition will be announced at the end of the month.



Milwaukee Public Schools hosted a family forum focusing on the needs of special education students and their families. The event helped families learn more about special education services, programs and summer opportunities. This Saturday forum featured a resource fair and workshops on topics ranging from youth mental health to summer programming and information on local support, resources and programs.

The Family Forum was sponsored by MPS, Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative (WSPEI), Alianza Latina Aplicando Soluciones (A.L.A.S.), Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education Training & Support (WI FACETS), Disability Rights Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Regional Centers/Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs.