

Report with Possible Action on Resolution 2122R-004 Middle School and High School Steering Committee

June 9, 2022

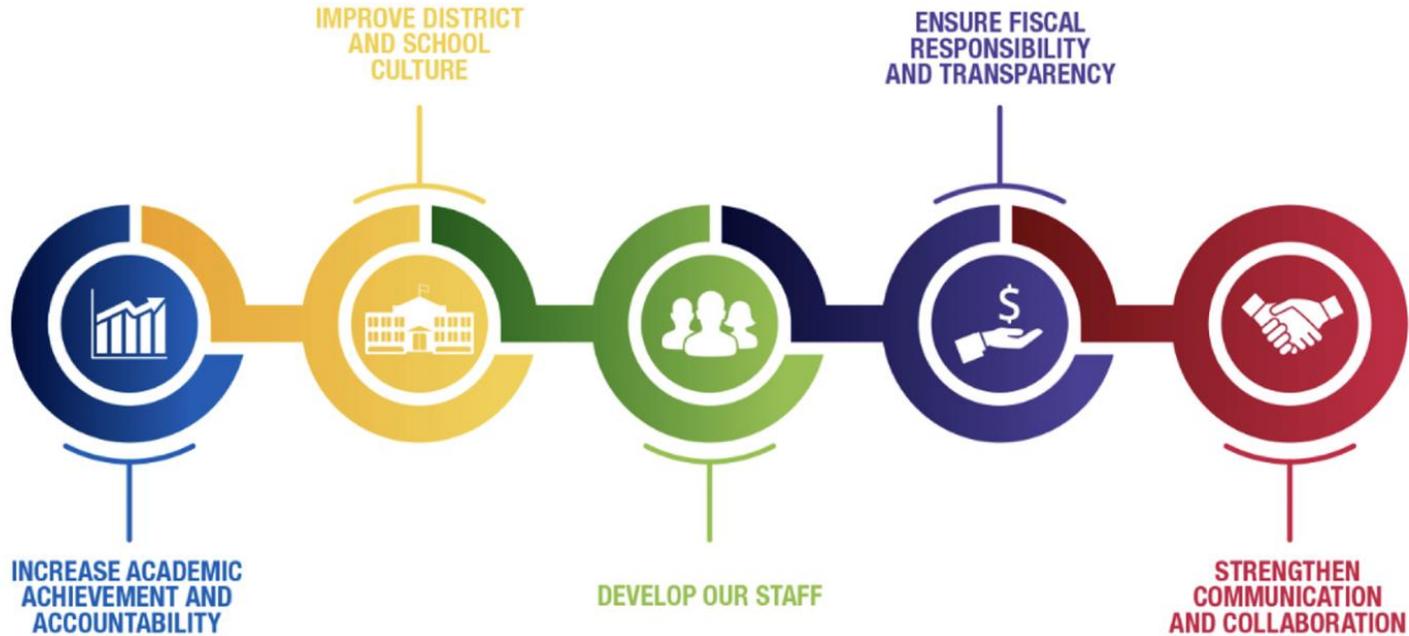


MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Presenters: Melanie R. Stewart, Ph.D., Director Research, Assessment and Data

Dr. Keith P. Posley,
Superintendent

Five Priorities for Success



Process

- Work Group met in October, November and December.
- A steering committee of that group was developed and met every other week from January to early May.
- Recommendations were developed to address equity in access to select criteria schools.

Steering Committee

- Sixteen members
- Racially diverse
- School personnel – teachers and administration
- Central Office Administration
- Parents
- MTEA
- Board member



Work of the Steering Committee

- Reviewed recommendations of the larger work group.
- Reviewed a wide range of data.
- Developed recommendations on both process and criteria for select criteria schools.



Findings

In recent years selective high schools in New York, Boston, San Francisco, and other cities have faced scrutiny for dramatically underrepresenting Black and Hispanic students. These inequities have been shaped by a number of policies, including heavily weighing entrance examinations or a single standardized test, opaque application procedures, and requiring parents to provide transportation to testing sites.

Findings

In contrast, the racial composition of the selective criteria schools within the Milwaukee Public Schools comes close to representing the racial demographics of the high schools in general. Policies that have influenced this outcome include basing acceptance on multiple criteria, transparency in how to apply for these schools, and requiring no transportation for access to testing sites.

Select Criteria Schools versus District

School	Black	Hispanic	White	Asian	SPED	ELL
Golda	62.7%	13.5%	14.5%	4.5%	10.8%	1.4%
MHSA	51.6%	20.9%	11.3%	12.9%	18.3%	15.9%
Reagan	7.5%	49.2%	33.3%	7.8%	10.1%	6.3%
Riverside	61.0%	22.7%	2.4%	11.5%	19.8%	15.9%
Rufus King	53.2%	16.9%	14.0%	12.1%	13.0%	5.8%
MPS Grades 9-12	53.1%	27.5%	8.1%	8.2%	21.2%	13.2%

Source: District Dashboard
May 2022



Findings

In short, the Equity Workgroup is providing recommendations to make a relatively fair process for admission into select criteria schools even fairer. In addition, we note that the select criteria schools do not get disproportionate funding and are expected to enroll the district average of special needs students.

Findings

We consequently see no reason for terminating selective criteria schools on equity grounds, and termination would likely cause a further drain of students from MPS, with serious consequences for district wide equity.

Recommendations

- All high schools will have the same enrollment window in the fall.
- The process has been simplified so families only need to list their choices.
- Families will be able to choose five schools.



Recommendations

- The district will improve communication within and outside the district about the strengths and special programs of all high schools.
- Academic Career Planning will be further embedded into all middle grade classes.



Recommendations

- Change the weight of the criteria to emphasize long term student effort (attendance and schoolwork) more than point in time assessments (standardized tests and the essay).
- Eliminate additional criteria, specifically completion of MYP for King and Reagan, letters of recommendation for Golda, and geography for Riverside.

Recommendations

- Auditions will be required for enrollment at Milwaukee High School of the Arts.
- Continue the practice of enrolling students in order of the highest number of criteria points.
- Continue the sibling preference of assigning one extra point for siblings on a waiting list.

See the attached table Comparison of Current and Proposed Criteria.



Recommendations

- Continue the required goal of 20% of seats be filled with students with disabilities.



Equity Summary

"The select criteria schools of Milwaukee are more reflective of the demographic makeup of the overall district than in most other cities. This may be due to an admissions process that is more well-rounded. Despite increased representation, however, Milwaukee schools—select criteria schools included—produce some of the most significant racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps in the U.S."

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/elite-or-elitist-lessons-for-colleges-from-selective-high-schools/>



Equity Summary

- All high schools have the same enrollment window.
- The district should make an intentional effort to increase the visibility of all high schools and their special programs and classes.
- Change the weight of the criteria to emphasize long-term student effort (attendance and schoolwork) more than point in time assessments (standardized tests and the essay).
- Increase emphasis in middle grades on Academic Career Planning to help students focus on next steps in their academic journey.
- Additional schools may become select criteria schools if more students choose a particular school than available seats.



Future Actions

- The administration will monitor the implementation of the changes proposed and report to the school board in the May 2023 board cycle to address any problems that may have occurred.
- The administration will address equity issues in the high schools to raise academic outcomes of all students in all schools.

Thank you.



Dr. Keith P. Posley, *Superintendent*

