



Report of the Office of Board Governance

Dr. Tina Owen-Moore – April 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. This has been an active month of learning and collaboration with the Board, Community and Administration. We have facilitated learning opportunities, assisted with crisis communications, responded to numerous requests for records and information, and have supported the onboarding of new board members and celebrations of outgoing board members. Here are just a few of the things that we have engaged in this month.

Community Safety Meeting

On March 26, 2025, the Office of Board Governance, in collaboration with the District Advisory Council (DAC) and the Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE), facilitated the second Community Meeting on the topic of School Safety. In the first meeting, it was clear that perceptions of what makes a school safe varied dramatically, so we spent some time envisioning what a safe school would look like. Then we discussed how we would know our schools were safe. (What would be measured?) Finally, we strategized around actions that could be taken to get to the visions.

We left this meeting with several recommendations for the Board, Superintendent and School Leaders.

Board Member Advocacy and Learning

This month, the Joint Finance Committee held budget listening sessions. Our Legislative Policy Manager and one of our board members attended the hearings in West Allis.

To support the research and development needs of board members, our office coordinated a site visit for two of our board members. Director Leonard and Director Ferguson visited the Whitewater School District to see their implementation of evidence-based literacy practices that are improving student academic outcomes.

MGT Report & Board Training

The Office of Board Governance is committed to assisting the Board with following through on recommendations from the MGT Operational Review that pertain to the Board and its governance.

During March, individual Board members completed the [Board Self-Evaluation process through the Wisconsin Association of School Boards \(WASB\)](#). This week, we hosted a Board retreat to review the results of that assessment and to set goals for the year ahead.

Some key areas of focus for the year ahead include:

- Increasing the communication, transparency and efficiency surrounding the budget process in order to build public confidence in the Board's stewardship of its financial resources.

- Benchmarking test results against districts with similar demographics and prior performance over the years.
- Having a process that allows key stakeholders (administrators, staff, parents and the community) to help create/refine our vision and strategic priorities.

Our office is also recommending a calendar for the upcoming board year which includes periodic retreats set aside for board professional development and governance support.

Our first retreat, in July, will focus on establishing board norms and learning about the charter school authorizer role.

In addition to Board development and training, based on recommendations from the MGT operational review, the Office of Board Governance is working to develop guiding documents for the Office of Board Governance, Office of Accountability and Efficiency, and the Office of the Superintendent.

Records Requests and Constituent Concerns

The number of records requests and constituent concerns has increased dramatically over the past several months. This month, we posted another Records Associate position. This addition will help us to keep up with the demands.

Celebrating Our Outgoing Board Members and Welcoming Our New Board Members

This month, we are saying goodbye to several board members who have worked tirelessly over the past four years to support the students and staff of the Milwaukee Public Schools. Thank you to the following board members for their commitment of time and care over their terms of service:

Director Henry Leonard (District 7)
Director Marcela “Xela” Garcia (District 6)
Director Jilly Gokalgandhi (District 5)

We cannot thank you enough for all you have done.

On April 1, 2025, our communities re-elected one incumbent board member and elected three new board members to the Milwaukee Board of School Directors. Please join us as we welcome:

Director James Ferguson (Incumbent, District 4)
Director Christopher Fons (District 5)
Director Mimi Reza (District 6)
Director Kate Vannoy (District 7)

Our office will facilitate an orientation to train and welcome new board members on Monday, April 21, 2025. Our team has updated the board’s Guidebook for Good Governance, and we are taking extra time and effort to ensure that new board members have the training and support they need to govern effectively from day one. Members-elect will be sworn in and take their oaths of office on Tuesday, April 22, 2025. Later that evening, they will be seated at the Board’s Annual Organizational Meeting where they will officially begin their duties as Board members.

At the Organizational Meeting, the Board will also be selecting its officers for the 2025-2026 board year.

Board Calendar and Committee Work

At the Regular Board Meeting on April 17th, 2025, the Office of Board Governance will be suggesting some changes to the board's calendar and its committee structures based on feedback from board members, feedback from the community, and our observations of how the work has moved forward over the past year. We hope to make the Parent and Community Engagement (PACE) Committee a true committee for parent and community engagement by using a format like the two community stakeholder meetings that have been facilitated over the past several months. Our office plans to continue to work with the Superintendent and Administration to develop meeting structures that will best facilitate the work that needs to be done across the district. Thank you for your continued support.

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

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.