

Resolution 2223R-016

By: Director Aisha Carr

WHEREAS, Milwaukee Public Schools is perfectly positioned to engage in the exploration of new and innovative school instructional models that will meet the needs of today's student learners and teachers, while also mitigating learning loss, improving districtwide culture and climate, establishing healthy partnerships, demonstrating fiscally responsible spending, and recruiting and retaining quality talent; and

WHEREAS, While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented many new challenges and has widened the pre-existing academic disparities that have significantly impacted historically disadvantaged students the hardest, the pandemic simultaneously has presented opportunities to design and to implement rigorous strategies of evidence-based initiatives, including the piloting and monitoring of new and innovative approaches; and

WHEREAS, Even before the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted learning, many of MPS's students were at a severe disadvantage with disproportionate representation in the lowest percentile of academic achievement in mathematics, reading and science, due to many factors including the digital divide, insufficient academic interventions and special education services, social deprivation, and persistent mental health crises; and

WHEREAS, According to the recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) report, for grade levels K-8, 14% of MPS students were proficient in English Language Arts while 8% were proficient in Math - MPS achievement data has consistently reflected declines for several years; and

WHEREAS, Many school districts across the country have adopted innovative, robust, and culturally responsive school restructuring strategies/models to prioritize: planning and professional development for Educators; extended, rigorous reading and mathematics instruction; the mental health and social emotional needs of students; student extended-learning opportunities with the support of businesses and community-based organizations; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee Public Schools' "Mission Aligned Partners" initiative supports the training and development of parents, students, teachers and industry leaders to: gain access to career exploration opportunities, align academic instructional plans to workforce labor market demands, and provide increased flexibility for students to earn credit beyond the traditional school day; and

WHEREAS, Community organizations, small minority-owned businesses, and leaders in youth development have all expressed a desire to collaborate with MPS to provide additional educational and youth-development services, including drivers education, dual enrollment, restorative practices, financial literacy, career pathways and college readiness, and other life-skills training and development opportunities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Milwaukee Board of School Directors hereby directs the Administration to explore the feasibility of implementing an innovative, robust, and culturally responsive modified school week and instructional model such as a four/five day school week; year-round schools; an early release day once per week; or a late start day once per week. The purpose of this study is to determine how to create more innovative and effective ways to retain our teachers, recruit more, establish a strong and safe districtwide culture, urgently address academic achievement and mental health of students, and leverage community businesses and organizations to support the other non-academic needs of our students and families; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That this feasibility study shall include, but not be limited to:

- a) analyses of a representative sampling of districts that are comparable with MPS which have implemented a modified school week schedule or innovative instructional model, including the impacts on student achievement; school culture and climate; recruitment and retention of teachers and staff; and any other factors that may have been engendered by such implementation;
- b) the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's mandates for instructional time and structures, including the legality and enforceability of different types of modified school week schedules;
- c) the probability of students, Teachers, families, community-based organizations, small businesses, funders, and other prospective community partners funding and participating in this initiative;
- d) the support and resources for, and the feasibility of, employers and business partners supporting this effort with paid internships and apprenticeships and professional extended learning opportunities for students and families of the district;
- e) the legality and practicality of using underutilized MPS buildings to support local, small minority-owned and -operated businesses with youth-specific service models and deliveries;
- f) the impact of an innovative school-week schedule on families' needs for childcare, food and nutritional services, and transportation, and ways in which to address these needs;
- g) the feasibility of developing a Parent Engagement Institute where Parent Coordinators will provide additional supports to the parents and families of MPS students; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the feasibility study should contemplate and make recommendations regarding the design and implementation of a potential pilot program for a modified school week schedule in order to gain a better understanding of the costs and benefits before considering district-wide implementation; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That a School Scheduling Task Force be created to ensure the fidelity of the study, to engage diverse stakeholder groups who are affected by the school day and school week schedule, consider the final conclusions of the feasibility study and make recommendations to the Board for its consideration; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Administration and the School Scheduling Task Force are to report their findings to the Board no later than the December 2023 board cycle.

Introduced February 23, 2023