



Enhancing Educational Communities and School Climate March 2025

A primary goal of Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) is to reduce discipline disproportionality across the district. This March report will address work from a variety of departments through February 28, 2025.

PACE Committee members and constituents have inquired about measuring mindsets of staff members across the district regarding antiracism and diversity and readiness of district systems for change.

Staff Mindsets & Readiness

In collaboration with the MPS Department of Research, Assessment, and Data, a district-wide survey is being created based on the Chicago Public Schools' Liberatory Thinking Tool to assess staff member readiness mindsets. The survey will assess staff member mindsets towards work of antiracism and diversity and well as readiness for next steps. The survey will be conducted in April with results shared within the May report. Tentative survey questions will ask questions such as individuals' understanding of racial inequities in the community, how often they have conversations with individuals of different experiences and perspectives, how they are setting high expectations for students, how they are continuing their journey understanding equity, and other questions formulated to assess readiness and growth mindsets of staff members throughout the district. Results will help formulate next steps needed to continue to move towards transformational change district-wide.

Additionally, MPS has begun collaborating with UW-Madison on a grant proposal that would help the district identify and assess readiness indicators critical to implementing restorative practices within the district. The current restorative practices implementation plan includes key readiness indicators that coaches can guide schools in developing during the exploration stage of implementation. Schools complete a needs assessment of four restorative systems within the school.

PACE Committee members and constituents have inquired about ensuring continued Courageous Conversations About Race (CCAR) implementation and integration into district culture.

Courageous Conversations About Race (CCAR) and District Equity Leadership Team

Newly hired staff members who have not previously attended CCAR have the opportunity to attend sessions throughout the year. On the district professional development day on February 18, 2025, all newly hired safety aides attended CCAR as part of their professional learning that day. Additionally, a virtual session was held for 120 paraprofessionals, certified health assistants, and CS staff members who have not previously attended. Sessions of Beyond Diversity were held in January and February for staff members looking to continue their journey with the framework, with over 100 attending. Additional sessions will be added for April, May, and June. Any staff member can enroll through our Learning Management System. All schools are required to send at least one staff member to one of the Beyond Diversity sessions.

Students will be engaged in CCAR as well. There were 80 middle and high school students who participated in Beyond Diversity for Students. This is a two-day seminar similar to Beyond Diversity that staff members attend, adjusted to meet the needs of students. Starting in April, these same 100 students will participate in a three-part series of Students Organized Against Racism (SOAR). During this series, students will be using the protocols learned at Beyond Diversity to engage in conversations about the role of race in their lives and their educational experience.

PACE Committee members and constituents have inquired about the evidence and success of the work occurring in schools, including implementation of TEECHS within identified schools.

Evidence and Success of Work

This school year, the district has engaged in a new approach to supporting schools through our Teaming for Equitable Education Coaching and Holistic Support (TEECHS). This approach is still being refined and updated as we move forward. In February a “State of TEECHS” was created highlighting early successes as well as next steps needed as we grow this approach through the end of the year. Some of the highlights of this approach we are already seeing include:

- All TEECHS schools have seen an increase in student attendance.
- Twelve of the schools have seen an increase in the percent (%) of students considered “regularly attending.”
- Ten of the schools have seen a decrease in the number of total suspensions.
- Nine of the schools have seen a decrease in the percentage of students suspended.
- All schools have lowered their mobility exit rate.
- A total of 823 documented Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavior interventions provided.
- A total of 342 support logs entered.
- Increased student participation in district Well-Being Survey and Youth Risk Behavior Screening (YRBS) Survey.
- Hot cocoa/coffee spirit cart before winter break.
- Creation of standard operating procedure best practice in use of American Lung Association anti-vaping curriculum as an alternative to suspension.
- Three additional schools trained in Link Crew peer mentoring for implementation in the 2025-2026 school year.
- Student focus groups and Student Discipline Committee meeting facilitation.
- Reading intervention schedules created at schools.
- Coverage of classrooms and other duties at schools.
- Collaboration with Stanford’s Lifting the Bar re-entry protocols for students moved due to disciplinary process.

Principals of all TEECHS schools were surveyed regarding the support of the Team of Aligned Needs (TAN) and additional support.

	Regularly	Somewhat Regularly	Rarely	Never
A group of individuals comes to our school weekly to support through TEECHS	54.5%	36.40%	0%	9.1%
The team (TAN) has been a positive influence at our school.	36.4%	36.4%	9.1%	18.0%
The members of the team (TAN) have been willing to do whatever is needed.	27.5%	54.5%	0%	18.0%
Members of the team (TAN) have built positive relationships with staff members.	44.7%	27.5%	18.4%	9.4%
TEECHS has been a positive collaboration that centers our school needs throughout the process	44.7%	18.4%	27.5%	9.4%

What feedback (positive or negative) do you have on this equitable, holistic approach we are utilizing through TEECHS?

- This program has the ability to truly meet people where they are at, but there has to be a willingness [from] all parties to do what is best for students and staff.
- Providing a space for staff to share to inform observations and solutions around climate and culture. Also provide staff with the opportunity of professional development based on their needs.
- The TAN team is always willing to jump in and help with whatever we need.
- TAN members have been able to de-escalate [two] student behaviors in the moment because they have made connections with [those] specific students.
- We are starting up an alternative to suspension for vaping infractions that includes four sessions around the dangers of vaping [and] managing trauma.
- We are introducing circles in some classes as a prelude to restorative practices courses to be offered next year.
- Multiple staff are getting instructional coaching.
- We are all working together to make it work. The TEECHS staff are eager to help us make gains.
- Alignment with school needs with student and/or teacher voice towards capacity building.
- We need more time to allow the support to grow.
- Schools with greater needs should be given more support to be equitable.
- The support is good but the frequency is far [too] spread out. If they could come twice a week (say Tuesday and Thursday) this would increase the positive impact that they have [in] the building.

PACE Committee members and constituents have inquired about mentoring and other opportunities for students who need additional support in schools.

Student Mentoring and Support

Link Crew is an evidence-based approach to student peer-mentoring from the Boomerang Project that is currently offered in four schools. Link Crew trains upperclassmen to be peer mentor and then starting at Freshmen Bridge, all incoming freshmen are assigned an upperclassmen mentor. Throughout the year there are opportunities for team building and mentoring to students. Three additional schools are being trained in Link Crew for implementation in the 2025-2026 school year, with three additional schools to be trained the following school year.

Within Continuous School Improvement Plans (CSIP), five schools have identified mentoring as their Evidence Based Improvement Strategy (EBIS) in alignment with Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's vision for school improvement. These schools created a theory of action around implementation of mentoring as a school-wide practice towards improving school climate.

The Department of Black and Latino Male Achievement partners with Greater Milwaukee and school personnel to bring community members into high schools every month for mentoring and conversations about life, goal setting, and school achievement. The MPS Family and Community Engagement team coordinated the second "Cuts and Conversations" at Marshall High School in which members of the community went to Marshall to meet with youth and mentor students while providing haircuts to interested students.

Within our approach to supporting schools based on need, TEECHS, additional opportunities for student mentoring are being explored and implemented.

PACE Committee members and constituents have inquired about additional support and interventions for students who have multiple suspensions and behavior infractions.

Student Interventions and Support

All schools have a Building Intervention Team (BIT) that oversees and coordinates all Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavioral interventions. On a monthly basis teams review student disciplinary data including suspensions, behavior referrals, and PLP Classroom Behavior data to identify students in need of additional support. Within the multi-tiered system of support, students can be provided interventions including Check-In/Check-Out (CICO), Social Academic Instructional Group (SAIG), Behavior Assessment/Intervention Plan (BAIP), and others. Schools document intervention plans and progress monitoring data within Infinite Campus. Schools continue to meet monthly, monitoring data and identifying additional students for intervention throughout the year. Building Intervention Team minutes are within the school's CSIP and are monitored by their district PBIS coach.

Analysis of students with multiple behavior referrals and behavior interventions shows that 42% of all students with 4 or more behavior referrals and 65% of students with 10 or more behavior referrals, have a documented behavior intervention in Infinite Campus. Additional analysis of classroom behaviors documented within Infinite Campus shows that 41% of students with a documented classroom behavior also have a documented behavior intervention and 65% of students with 30 or more documented classroom behaviors also have a documented behavior intervention.

All staff members document strategies utilized within the classroom to manage behaviors prior to a behavior referral or any disciplinary actions taking place. When analyzing data, we find that restorative conversation has been documented as a classroom strategy 2,965 times and repairing harm circles 70 times. Looking at all strategies, there have been 117,049 strategies documented across the district this school year with one-on-one conversation, redirection, and support staff consultation used the most often.

PACE Committee members and constituents have inquired about additional support and interventions for students who continually disrupt the educational environment and create unsafe learning environments.

Students with Severe Behavioral Infractions

Milwaukee Public Schools Administrative Policy 8.32 indicates all exclusions for students with behavioral infractions are expulsions with services. Many school districts expel students with behavioral infractions without any services or opportunities provided for the family to continue their education. MPS continually works with all students and families to find the most appropriate educational environment for all students. Additionally, for smaller behavioral infractions that do not necessitate an expulsion with services, the decision may be made to transfer the student to another MPS school that may be able to better support the student and family.

In our ongoing desire to best serve students in need, MPS is contracting with Imagine Learning to develop a program called Students Utilizing Resources for Growth & Excellence (SURGE) as an option for students after a disciplinary infraction. SURGE would be available for students in grades 6 through 12 who have had a behavioral infraction at their school that reaches a specific level of discipline within the district's code of conduct.

PACE Committee members and constituents have inquired about topics discussed with student leadership groups and areas of concern for students.

Student Leadership Committees

Student discipline committees at all traditional middle and high schools have been meeting monthly to further examine their problem of practice, starting to gather additional student voice, and researching potential recommendations for the school and district. This work continues on a monthly basis, with minutes entered and submitted online. The Fall Student Leadership Summit will occur on May 30, 2025, at UW-Milwaukee. Each school team will present their work from the year and the overall recommendation students are proposing based on their school's problem of practice.

Reviewing what students have been discussing so far, we see problems of practice including reducing fighting, welcoming new students throughout the year, drug and substance abuse, student and teacher relationship building, and other topics. Each month students also identify what data sets are being utilized with student voice being the most common data set used, followed by suspension and behavior referral data.

PACE Committee members and constituents have inquired about historical trends, and current reality with disciplinary practices by race and grade level.

Suspension Deep Dive

All data through February 28, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

Across all schools there have been 7,190 students suspended, 13,314 total suspensions, and a total of 33,279 days of suspension.

Suspensions by race

	Hispanic/ Latino	American Indian	Asian	Black/ African American	Native Hawaiian	White	Multiple Races
Total Suspensions	2,102	64	220	10,041	5	302	580
Percent of all Suspensions	15.79%	0.48%	1.65%	75.42%	0.04%	2.27%	4.36%
Percent of Enrollment	28.6%	0.3%	9.3%	48.7%	0.1%	8.5%	4.5%

Suspensions by grade

K4	K5	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade
23	54	159	257	323	488	523
6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
1307	1544	1741	3330	1893	1089	583

Suspensions by month comparison

Month	2024-2025	2023-2024	2022-2023
August	XXX	524	692
September	1,578	1,971	2,357
October	2,700	3,047	2,336
November	2,411	3,143	2,259
December	1,967	2,087	1,824
January	2,069	2,130	2,821
February	2,364	2,856	2,462