



Superintendent’s Report – February 2022

The Superintendent’s Report is designed to provide the Milwaukee Board of School Directors and the MPS community with an update on current activities under way 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 strategic objectives and the Five Priorities for Success.



MPS Celebrates Black History Month



Black History Month is coming alive in Milwaukee Public Schools! Students and staff are planning, preparing, and participating in activities, projects, and performances all across the district, honoring the contributions of Black Americans who have helped build our country, enhance everyday lives, and promote peace and equality. This year, staff and students have been extremely creative in developing the delivery of our Black History Month celebrations virtually.

Schools have hosted virtual programs, classroom teachers have taken students on virtual field trips, and individual students have created online presentations. This is all in addition to our traditional classroom activities such as speeches, posters, essays, and performances. We are proud of the rich learning experiences in which our schools are engaging in bringing Black History Month to life.

Black Lives Matter Week

This was a week of phenomenal experiences. We had over 750 participants join us for our week-long campaign. Activities included a kick-off with Dr. Decoteau J. Irby and went on to include a Black film festival conversation, panel discussions, and a staff and student showcase. Prior to our week-long campaign, schools engaged in monthly activities that focused on restorative justice, globalism and collective value, and Black villages. Activities will continue through March and April with loving engagement and empathy and radical Black educators.



Logo designed by Fardoso Iman, student
MPS Story Elementary School

We look forward to the continued work in both our Black History Month and Black Lives Matter Campaign activities as we finish out the month of February.

Professional Development

We have been working diligently with departments, schools, and staff on school culture districtwide. The enrollment in the following professional development offerings is evidence that we are moving in the right directions.

Restorative Practices

We had an overwhelming interest in the foundations of restorative practices and circles professional development courses. As a result, we have created additional sessions for staff to help ensure that everyone has an opportunity to receive this training.

M-Cubed

Nearly 300 teachers signed up to participate in the M-Cubed Professional Development Day in February. The Professional Development Day topics included how to improve teaching practices, better understand students, address institutional racism, and create curriculum connections.

Courageous Conversations about Race (CCAR)

More than 2,600 administrators, teachers, and support staff completed the Courageous Conversations about Race professional development. Current staff will have the opportunity to sign up for this professional development, and it will be a part of the onboarding process for new staff.

MPS Virtual Kindergarten Enrollment Fair

Milwaukee Public Schools hosted a virtual Kindergarten Enrollment Fair on February 5, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This virtual fair was critical for the surrounding families looking to begin their child's formal education. Hosting this fair allowed families the chance to explore schools they may not otherwise have had an opportunity to visit. During the virtual fair, families were able to speak with school personnel one-on-one, take a virtual tour, ask questions, and feel the culture of the school community. Once parents completed their virtual visits, they had the option to select a school and register while at the virtual fair.



Along with the schools offering kindergarten, there was a booth for parents to learn more about and apply for the federal Head Start program. As a result of the fair, the MPS Head Start office received 30 new online applications for fall 2022.

School Counselors Are Spotlited

Thank you to MPS school counselors! Every day, school counselors impact the lives of students and help children find success in school. National School Counseling Week, sponsored by the American School Counselor Association, took place February 7-11, 2022. This week focused public attention on the professional school counselors who work with students every day, helping them to achieve in school, navigate life, and plan for a career.

School counselors promote success by seeing each child for children for their needs and taking steps to meet those needs, whether it is a new backpack or comfort after the loss of a loved one. During a typical school year, counselors are actively engaged in working with parents to understand a child's personal situation; in focusing on positive ways to enhance students' social/personal, educational, and career development; and in working with teachers and other educators so that students can realize their potential and set healthy aspirations for themselves. The training and experience of school counselors makes them an integral part of the total education program.

Health and Safety

We continue to work closely with stakeholders as we navigate through the unpredictable changes of COVID-19. In response to these changes, we have added additional testing sites for staff and families, worked with our health and safety team along with the MPS school board to revisit COVID-19 protocols, provided additional supplies to schools, and continued working with local and state agencies to ensure that we are current on COVID-19 guidelines.

Youth Apprenticeships and Internships

We are excited to share that we had 39 students hold an apprenticeship and 169 students hold an internship during first semester of the 2021–22 school year. These apprenticeships and internships varied in the fields of interest. The fields included hospitality and tourism; health science; transportation, distribution, and logistics; agriculture, food, and nutrition resources; arts, audiovisual technology, and communications; manufacturing; informational technology; education and training; finance; STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics); and law, public safety, corrections, and security. We will continue to work with our youth and partnerships to place more students in internships and apprenticeships.



Financial Literacy

We were recognized by the Governor’s Council on Financial Literacy and Capability for adopting a graduation requirement for personal finance in 2021. This makes Milwaukee Public Schools one of only 12 urban school districts in the country to put this requirement in place without a state policy. This historic decision guarantees that all students in the Milwaukee Public Schools system will receive financial education. This initiative will be a game-changer for Milwaukee students, impacting hundreds this year at three schools and thousands as the program is rolled out to every school in the district over the coming years. The guaranteed financial education resulting from this initiative is one of the most effective ways to break down the barriers to full financial inclusion and equity that exist in under-resourced communities.