



MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## Superintendent's Report – October

The Superintendent's Report is designed to provide the Milwaukee Board of School Directors and the MPS community with an update on current activities underway 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.



## SCHOOL VISITS

School visits remain a priority and serve as an excellent mechanism for gathering feedback to support district improvement efforts. This month, I had the opportunity to visit Andrew Douglas Elementary, Cass Street, Manitoba, Marvin Pratt Elementary, Milwaukee Spanish Immersion, Morse Middle School, Reagan High School, North Division High School and Vincent High School. I also celebrated National School Lunch Program week with students at Allen-Field and Fratney elementary schools.

## EVENTS/PROGRAMS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

### *The Art Start Portrait Project, Gallery Opening in Milwaukee for Boys and Men of Color Week 2019*

MPS students, [MPS Department of Black and Latino Male Achievement](#), and [Art Start](#) hosted an opening reception at Inova Gallery in commemoration of Boys and Men of Color Week. The Art Start Portrait Project 2019 is a multimedia platform for Milwaukee's boys and young men of color to portray the complex narratives about their identities, asking the world to see them for how they choose to be seen.

In 2019, Art Start, continuing in partnership with MPS's Black and Latino Male Achievement Department, participating youth answered the statement "**See Me Because...**" Over nine months of Art Start creative workshops, mentoring, oral



history interviews and photo-shoots, participants explore their personal identity and envision their lives beyond stereotype. With the collaboration of world-class photographers, stylists, and oral historians, those visions will come to life through a multimedia gallery exhibition and public campaign, #SeeMeBecause this fall in Milwaukee, offering a platform for self-determination, representation, and liberation. The Art Start Portrait Project challenges the belief that the future will simply be a continuation of the past, or that stereotypes, statistics, and circumstance determine our youths' existence.

### ***Cass Street School opens new STEM Center***

Students cheered as the ribbon was cut to open the new STEM Center at **Cass Street School**. After several months of planning, painting, organizing, and installing, the space was completed and ready to help students sharpen their science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills.



The STEM Center would not have been possible without a generous grant of \$130,000 from local partner **Rockwell Automation**. Rockwell has partnered with Cass Street for the past five years, providing mentorship, event support, and volunteers in the school, frequently offering expertise in STEM fields.

Curriculum in the new STEM Center will be based in Project Lead The Way (PLTW) modules. PLTW is a nationally recognized service provider offering hands-on learning for students in the areas of engineering, robotics, biomedical science, computer science, and interdisciplinary science exploration. The STEM Center includes updated technology equipment including tablets, projectors, 3D printers, supplies, consumables, and vex equipment for middle school PLTW modules.

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee** has helped drive programming for the project and will support after-school use of the STEM Center for students and families. The new facility will impact the Milwaukee community beyond the walls of Cass Street School.

### ***Vincent High School hosted annual gala showcasing agriculture program***

The goats, chickens, horse, and other animals at **Vincent High School** were on their best behavior to greet guests for the school's annual Farm-to-Table Fundraiser. Visitors toured barns, met the animals, and chatted with students about the work involved in caring for animals. Guests then toured the school's greenhouse, classrooms, and café.



Vincent's culinary students were kept busy preparing appetizers and other treats for visitors. Attendees enjoyed brats, chicken, eggs, potatoes, tomatoes, and more. Culinary students also had candles, lip balm, and lotions for sale made from aloe and beeswax produced right at the school.

Students also offered a silent auction that included plants grown in the greenhouse, cooking items, a monthly basket of lettuce, and a processed lamb that was raised for the State Fair.

Vincent High School has the only agriculture program in Milwaukee County. Students have access to Advanced Placement courses and can select classes focused on aquaponics, biology, botany, culinary arts, food science, greenhouse techniques, landscape and design, marketing, technology, urban agriculture, urban gardening/horticulture, and veterinary science.

## ***Playfield Revitalization Project***

Milwaukee Recreation broke ground on the **Clovernook Playfield** and **Franklin Square Playfield** revitalization projects. This follows the completed renovations made at Columbia Playfield and Custer Playfield in the previous two months.



Clovernook Playfield (6594 N. Landers St.) will now feature upgraded, age-appropriate playground equipment, a splash pad, basketball courts, shade structures, and a multi-purpose field. New and upgraded site amenities will also be added, including lighting, benches and trash receptacles.

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Franklin Square Playfield (2643 N. 13th St.) will include basketball courts, age-appropriate playground equipment, a splash pad, shade structures, a multi-purpose field, and its own obstacle course.

## ***Mentor sessions and programs support MPS Black and Latino youth***

The Black & Latino Male Achievement (BLMA) Department kicked off its monthly mentoring program this month at the Fiserv Forum. Nearly 250 young men from seven MPS high schools were present along with dozens of volunteer mentors from around the community. Mayor Tom Barrett was in attendance to offer his thanks for this program that supports our youth.



Black and Latino male students in MPS will have opportunities to enjoy lunch with Black and Latino male mentors throughout the school year to allow them to converse about topics to help them succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. Now in its third year, the First Thursday Mentor Luncheon program started with two schools and 60 students; this year, it grows to seven sites and nearly 250 students.

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Conversations in the past two years have been rich and diverse, and boys have expressed appreciation for hearing how men have overcome obstacles and achieved success. Topics have included:

- Perspectives on authority and power, and appropriate and inappropriate use of both
- Discussions on the importance of self-esteem and self-care for manhood
- Employment and careers, and understanding how public-school education is a starting point to an ongoing road to success.

The Department of Black & Latino Male Achievement works to collaboratively create the systems, structures and spaces that guarantee success for all Black and Latino boys and young men in Milwaukee Public Schools.

## ***MFD provides thousands of winter coats to Milwaukee children***

For the eighth year in a row, Milwaukee firefighters are protecting local children by providing warm coats, so students can travel safely to school in winter. At Manitoba school on October 8, the Milwaukee Fire Department (MFD) celebrated the distribution of its 40,000th coat.

In collaboration with national nonprofit Operation Warm, Milwaukee firefighters engaged in fundraising throughout the year to be able to purchase as many coats as possible. Fundraisers included the [Fill the Boot campaign](#) in June and the [Hero's Haul Firetruck Pull](#) in September.



This year, the MFD purchased 6,000 coats, bringing the eight-year total to 40,000 coats. Students in 19 schools have received coats this week, preparing them for the winter weather season

The MFD credits the assistance of the MFD Warm Up Winter Committee, Great Lakes Distillery, Operation Warm, Milwaukee Radio Group B93.3, and the generosity of all those who dropped money in the boot this past summer when MFD ran its Fill the Boot campaign.

Operation Warm accepts donations for winter coats throughout the year. If you'd like to host a fundraiser or make a gift to purchase coats for Milwaukee children, visit the [Operation Warm page for MPS](#) and make a selection.

- \$20 puts a brand-new coat on an MPS student
- \$500 will provide coats for an entire classroom
- \$2,500 helps a busload of students keep warm

## ***Fall Student Leadership Summit Convenes***

The most important voices in Milwaukee Public Schools are those of our students, and this month, the fall Student Leadership Summit engaged more than 300 students from 31 schools. The gathering of middle and high school students allowed attendees to take part in training and focus groups designed to enable and empower them to lead conversations and gather input from their peers.

Held at American Serb Hall, attendees listened to district leaders including members of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors. Students also broke into groups to learn how to engage their peers and accurately report their opinions. This year's Student Leadership Summits are focusing specifically on discipline policies and procedures.



Students will reconvene in May to present their recommendations regarding district policies and procedures.

## **AWARDS/RECOGNITION**

### ***MPS alumni honored at Foundation gala***

MPS alumni are doing great work in the Milwaukee community and were honored on by the MPS Foundation. Eight individuals and community partners were recognized for their support of Milwaukee Public Schools and outstanding achievement.

Hosted at Discovery World, attendees enjoyed a delicious dinner and were treated to a sampling of students' finest work. A silent auction included nine artworks by MPS students, and beautiful table centerpieces were designed by students from Vincent High School. Entertainment was also provided by MPS students and included Vincent High School cheerleaders, DJ Bizzon and his DJ Club students, and Milwaukee High School of the Arts Jazz Band. A dessert tasting capped off the evening that was prepared by Bay View High School culinary arts students.



Please help us congratulate the MPS Alumni honorees for 2019.

**Start, Stay, Succeed Champions:** Rick and Laura Polk

**Young Alumni Award:** Sarina James

**Emerging Alumni:** Angie Swan

**Service Award:** Joaquin Altoro

**Corporate Partner:** Milwaukee Bucks and Milwaukee Bucks Foundation

**Lifetime Achievement:** Bruce Weber

## INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT VOICE

A shared goal of the Milwaukee Board of School Directors and the Administration is providing increased opportunities for student voice throughout the district and at the monthly Board meetings. With that goal in mind, I have continued my listening sessions with students. Through these sessions, I learn a lot about what is important to students, including what makes them most proud about MPS and what their ideas are for increasing student voice in district decision making.

This month, I would like to introduce the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council (SSAC) for the 2019-2020 school year.

