



Milwaukee Public Schools

January 10, 2008

District report card: student achievement is up *Test scores show gains in Reading, Math in most grades*

The Milwaukee Public Schools district has shown progress across a number of performance measures, particularly at the elementary and middle grade levels, according to the newly released district report card.

The Milwaukee Public Schools District Report Card is presented annually to families, schools, the Milwaukee Board of School Directors, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and others as a report of current conditions and student achievement trends. Because of the need to collect and interpret data for a complete school year, the report always reflects the prior school year. In this case, it is the 2006-2007 MPS school year.

MPS students recorded achievement gains (scoring at/above proficient) in five of the seven grades assessed by WKCE in Reading and six of the seven grades in Math. “Our focus on Math, through the National Science Foundation grant, is beginning to pay dividends,” said MPS Superintendent William Andrekopoulos. “We see that especially in the schools that fully implemented reforms.”



More than one of every four (26%) MPS elementary schools with WKCE Grade 4 results are performing at, above or within 90% of the state-wide proficiency average in Reading last year. That's up from 23% the year before. In Math, about 24% of all elementary schools reached this level. That's up from 16% the prior year. Among these high achieving schools are several like Westside Academy, Bethune Academy and Escuela Vieau that have high concentrations of students from poverty.

The report card also establishes that MPS, which has had periods of enrollment increases and declines over the last few decades, is now in a period of declining enrollment. MPS has lost 13,000 students over the last ten years, and has more school capacity than students. The largest number of students in any grade is at 9th grade with more than 9,000 students.

The challenges facing 9th grade students continue. About a third of all 9th graders in the 2006-2007 school year were repeating the grade, having failed to earn enough credits to move on. MPS initiatives such as the expansion of K-8 schools are designed to help better prepare students for 9th grade. Roughly half of all MPS elementary schools are now K-8s. The addition of small high schools and smaller learning communities is also meant to engage students who need support to fulfill their potential.

Other important data revealed in the 2006-2007 MPS Report Card:

- Nearly eight of every 10 MPS students are now eligible for free and reduced lunch.
- The number of students with disabilities is now more than 17% of all MPS students.
- English Language Learners now account for almost 8% of all students.
- Student attendance at the high school grades had risen over each of the previous five years but declined somewhat in 2006-2007.

The percentage of students suspended at least once during the school year is highest at the middle grade level (38%) and high school level (36%). Nearly one of every two 9th graders was suspended last year. Superintendent Andrekopoulos noted that over half of all suspensions are for classroom disruption. “We need to work with schools to develop alternatives to out of school suspension in dealing with disruptive classroom behavior. We’ve asked the Council of Great City Schools to research the issue of suspensions, and report back to us.”

The graduation rate has yet to be released by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI.) MPS’ graduation rate has risen each of the past five years for a total increase of 16 percentage points. Based on the DPI’s reporting system, the MPS graduation rate was established at 68% for school year 2005-2006.

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The MPS district has developed a comprehensive long-range strategic plan which sets targets for continued improvements in student, school and district performance, and outlines strategies for meeting those targets.

The entire MPS 2006-2007 Report Card is available on the MPS Portal at: <http://www2.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/acctrep/rc07.html> Parents and others have access to information about individual schools and learn about district demographics and trends. New to the report card this year: ACT results along with Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate data.

For more information, contact Roseann St. Aubin, Office of Communications and Public Affairs at (414) 475-8237.

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Office of Communications and Public Affairs

5225 W. Vliet St., P.O. Box 2181 ■ Milwaukee, WI 53201-2181

Phone: (414) 475-8237 ■ FAX: (414) 475-8430 ■ E-mail: 537@mail.milwaukee.k12.wi.us