WELCOME

Friends,

After serving in several roles with Milwaukee Succeeds since its inception, I was excited to be asked to become the executive director in May. My first priority in this new role is to communicate how we can improve educational outcomes for every child in Milwaukee. This annual report provides updates on the metrics we have chosen to track, as well as some highlights from our achievements over the last year. This milestone report shows the good work we are doing, and the work that still needs to be done.

We are beginning to see successes while laying the groundwork for systemic change. The good news is that 10 of the 11 educational benchmarks are moving in a positive direction. We believe these are important educational indicators and that our collective efforts are having an impact. We still have a long way to go to reach our 2020 goals, but we are excited about our potential to achieve those targets. For example, Milwaukee Succeeds and our partners are implementing strategies that are making promising gains in reading skills at schools across sectors and are building the support needed to scale those strategies in our education delivery system.

At a recent Milwaukee Succeeds Leadership Council meeting, Dr. Rachel Lander for UW-Milwaukee School of Education shared insight into the process of taking a pilot program and scaling it to fit the broader Milwaukee Succeeds footprint. Lander, an expert in evaluating reform efforts and literacy programs in urban school districts noted, “We’re applying the theory of change in terms of scaling: we’re perfecting the model in these pilot schools but at the same time working with the district about how to implement them district wide. We’re as determined as we can be with these schools to get the model perfect.”

This is my “scale up” challenge – starting in 2016 (2015-2016 school year), we will bring our Transformative Reading Instruction Model (classroom coaches providing teachers with simple tips on reading and behavior management) to more Milwaukee Public Schools, choice and charter schools. A critical component of that model is the Wisconsin Reading Corps tutoring initiative (a replication of the proven Minnesota Reading Corp program). I know we can do it, and this will put us on track to achieving our goal of being among the top cities for third grade reading by 2020.

To dive deeper into our data, download our full report at milwaukeesucceeds.org. While you are on the website, take a look at our outstanding partners and thank them for helping Milwaukee’s children. If you don’t see your name – reach out to me and join us!

Danae Davis, Executive Director
MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: A LOOK AT THE DATA

The table below provides a profile of the benchmarks we believe are important indicators for how well we are doing as a community in accomplishing our educational goals.

Generally, our data include results from all public, choice, and charter schools. In some instances, the data reflect two of the three school sectors, but at no time does the data reflect the performance of any single school sector. Further, due to variability in data access, the baseline year is not exactly the same across metrics. In general, we consider our baseline year to be 2011-2012, but some data are not reported by academic year. All data represent points in time; year-over-year data does not reflect results from the same students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 1: Kindergarten Readiness</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Baseline 2011-12</th>
<th>Year 2 2012-13</th>
<th>Year 3 2013-14</th>
<th>Target 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immunization</td>
<td>MKE 65%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(up to date 24-month rate)</td>
<td>WI 67%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YoungStar</td>
<td>MKE 8%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% in 4 or 5 star centers)</td>
<td>WI 14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PALS</td>
<td>MKE 83%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% met benchmark)</td>
<td>WI 89%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 2: School Readiness</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Baseline 2011-12</th>
<th>Year 2 2012-13</th>
<th>Year 3 2013-14</th>
<th>Target 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd grade reading</td>
<td>MKE 15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% proficient or advanced)</td>
<td>WI 33%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd grade math</td>
<td>MKE 23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% proficient or advanced)</td>
<td>WI 51%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th grade reading</td>
<td>MKE 15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% proficient or advanced)</td>
<td>WI 33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th grade math</td>
<td>MKE 18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% proficient or advanced)</td>
<td>WI 45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT composite</td>
<td>MKE 16.8</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% met ACT benchmarks in 3 or 4 subjects</td>
<td>WI 22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 3: Career Readiness</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Baseline 2011-12</th>
<th>Year 2 2012-13</th>
<th>Year 3 2013-14</th>
<th>Target 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-34 y/o associate’s degrees or higher</td>
<td>MKE 34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WI 41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34 y/o bachelor’s degrees or higher</td>
<td>MKE 28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WI 30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal 4: Social &amp; Emotional Health</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Baseline 2011-12</th>
<th>Year 2 2012-13</th>
<th>Year 3 2013-14</th>
<th>Target 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

All children and young people are healthy, supported socially and emotionally and contribute responsibly to the success of the Milwaukee community. This goal has no indicators because it is an essential element to accomplish goals one, two and three, and therefore, integrated and targeted in all Milwaukee Succeeds endeavors.
GOAL 1: KINDERGARTEN READINESS - METRICS
ALL CHILDREN ARE PREPARED TO ENTER SCHOOL

Multiple factors contribute to children's preparedness for school, such as good health and positive early learning experiences. Since there is no one indicator that captures everything it means to be kindergarten-ready, we track three that illustrate various levels of readiness:

• 24-month-olds, up-to-date immunization rates
• Percentage of children in high quality child care programs
• Percentage of kindergarten students who met the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening benchmark

All three indicators for this goal area have improved since 2012-13 and also have improved over the base year of 2011-12.

IMMUNIZATIONS
We base our early childhood immunization strategies and measurement on the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Association of Pediatricians (AAP) recommendations for up-to-date immunizations for 24-month-olds. The Milwaukee Health Department shares those recommendations.

For the current year, there were 10,195 2-year olds included in the Wisconsin Immunization Registry. As the chart below shows, the percentage of those 2-year olds who were fully immunized has increased from 55 percent to 61 percent since the baseline year.
QUALITY CHILD CARE
Children who attend high quality child care and are supported by a caring adult are more likely to enter school ready to learn. In Wisconsin, child care programs that serve low-income families through Wisconsin Shares are rated on a scale of 1 to 5 Stars through a quality rating and improvement system called YoungStar. In the current year, 19,770 Milwaukee children participated in Wisconsin Shares. Of those, 2,288, or 12 percent, are in 4 or 5 Star-rated programs, up from 8 percent in the baseline year.

YoungStar: Percentage of Children in 4 or 5 Star-rated Programs

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS LITERACY SCREENING (PALS):
PALS diagnoses students’ knowledge of reading fundamentals and identifies students at risk for reading difficulties. By tracking the percentage of students who meet set benchmarks in kindergarten, this screener provides additional information on school readiness. In the current year, 6,433 Milwaukee kindergarten (K5) students were screened. Of those, 87 percent met the benchmark, up from 83 percent in the baseline year.

PALS: Percentage of Kids Meeting Benchmark

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
**KINDERGARTEN READINESS: INITIATIVES**  
**INCREASING ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE**

**ISSUE**  
We know that children who attend high-quality child care do better in school. Yet less than 12 percent of the 19,770 children in families receiving child care subsidies from the state are in highly-rated programs in Milwaukee.

**PROJECT**  
With funding from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County, the Milwaukee Succeeds Quality Early Care and Education Network began work within high density areas in Milwaukee that have the fewest high-quality child care options.

This network is implementing a pilot initiative to improve the 2 Star rating of 12 child care centers by assisting the center’s staff to obtain needed postsecondary education credits. In addition, all centers are receiving 30 hours of consultation from YoungStar staff and will be mentored by current centers with 4 or 5 Star ratings.

The 12 centers serve a combined total of approximately 600 children.

**PROGRESS**  
The Wisconsin Early Childhood Association and 4Cs for Children are collaborating to provide services to the 12 centers.

Staff at the centers are receiving early childhood education credits and are improving their knowledge of child development.

Center leaders will complete their administrative credentials and learn how to improve their center’s operations.

The centers expect to meet state qualifications and increase their YoungStar rating, with the first centers expected to increase their ratings in fall 2015.

“Child care programs participating in the Milwaukee Succeeds Early Childhood Quality Initiative report that this is the first time they feel like they have gotten all the support they need to truly be successful in moving their program towards higher standards of quality.”

Jeanette Paulson, Director of Workforce Studies, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
EARLY CHILDHOOD SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH

ISSUE
Low income children are nearly twice as likely to experience significant trauma leading to negative behaviors and negative outcomes.

We know that social-emotional learning programs will provide tools to reduce the impact of significant trauma and improve academic performance.

PROJECT
Convened as part of Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children’s Health), the Early Childhood Mental Health Steering Committee aimed to identify opportunities to strengthen the capacity of the early childhood service system to address the mental health needs of young children and their families. When the initiative was coming to a close in September 2014, stakeholders realized the importance of maintaining the work and connected with the Milwaukee Succeeds early childhood group to continue the progress in meeting the social and emotional development needs of our youngest children and their families.

In late 2014, the group was reconstituted as the Milwaukee Succeeds Early Childhood Social Emotional Development Network.

PROGRESS
Milwaukee Succeeds was able to bridge the momentum of the Early Childhood Mental Health Steering Committee into a Goal 1 network that will maintain and strengthen the efforts around social emotional development in young children.

“Early childhood social emotional development establishes the brain architecture upon which all later development occurs. There can be no school readiness, reading success, increased graduation and college placement without a strong foundation established through high-quality relationships. I am proud to be part of the Milwaukee Succeeds efforts to be truly cradle to career.”

Kevin O’Brien, Aurora Family Service
GOAL 2: SCHOOL READINESS - METRICS
ALL CHILDREN SUCCEED ACADEMICALLY AND GRADUATE PREPARED FOR MEANINGFUL WORK AND / OR COLLEGE.

Milwaukee Succeeds tracks six key measures to gauge if our children are on track to graduate and are ready to pursue college or a meaningful career:

- Third grade reading
- Third grade math
- Eighth grade reading
- Eighth grade math
- ACT Composite
- Percentage meeting ACT College Readiness Benchmarks (CRBs) in 3 or 4 subjects

Of these measures, five are trending up. Eighth grade reading is down from last year, a trend seen not just in Milwaukee, but statewide as well.

READING AND MATH
Reading and math skills form the foundation of subsequent learning. Specifically for reading, research suggests that up until third grade, students learn to read. After that point, they read to learn. That is why improving reading proficiency is crucial. We track these skills through the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examination (WKCE) for third and eighth grade Milwaukee students.

Of the 7,834 Milwaukee third graders who took the reading exam in 2013-14, 16 percent scored proficient or advanced, up from 15 percent in the baseline year. Of the 7,834 third graders who took the math exam for 2013-14, 24 percent scored proficient or advanced, up from 23 percent in the baseline year.
For eighth graders, 16 percent of the 6,677 students who took the reading exam scored proficient or advanced, up 1 percentage point since baseline (this score increased 2 percentage points in year 2 but declined again). Of the 6,378 eighth graders who took the math exam in the current year, 22 percent scored proficient or advanced, up from 18 percent in the baseline year.

THE ACT
ACT scores are a common measure universities use to gauge student readiness for the academic challenges of college and careers. ACT, Inc. created a report of aggregate ACT scores presented in the charts below. The report includes scores for seniors in all high schools whose majority student population resides in the city of Milwaukee, including public and non-public schools.

ACT scores are improving slightly. The 4,597 test takers who graduated in 2014 had an average composite score of 17.5, up from 16.8 in the baseline year and 17 last year. The composite score is the test score average across all four subject areas. Even with the noted improvement, the gap between Milwaukee students and their state peers is wide. Wisconsin ranged second in the nation with an ACT composite score of 22.1.

ACT, Inc. estimates that students who meet the ACT benchmarks have a 50 percent chance of earning a B or higher or a 75 percent chance of earning a C or higher in similar, first year college courses. For the 2014 data (current year), 18 percent of the 4,597 test takers met CRBs in 3 or 4 subject areas, up from 13 percent in the baseline year.
The disparity in ACT scores by race is striking and has remained relatively unchanged since the base year of 2012. Among the Milwaukee seniors in 2014 who took the ACT, the average composite score was 17.5. White students scored an average of 23.1, African American students 15.4, and Hispanic students 17.2. Also, among the seniors who took the test, 38 percent of white students met all four CRBs, slightly higher than both the state and national percentages. However, just 2 percent of African American students and 6 percent of Hispanic students met all four CRBs.

### MKE 2014 Seniors:
**ACT Composite Score by Race/Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ACT, Inc., customized report

### ACT: Percentage of 2014 Seniors Meeting all Four Benchmarks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKE</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKE White</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKE African American</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKE Hispanic</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### DISPARITY IN STUDENT PREPARATION

One important factor in how well students do on the ACT exam is the level of classes they take throughout their academic career. ACT, Inc. data suggest that students who take more of the “core” courses are more likely to meet CRBs. “Core” refers to students taking four or more years of English AND three or more years each of math, social studies, and natural science. Also, making core curriculum a priority helps develop college and work readiness skills, regardless of postsecondary aspirations.

Here, too, there is vast racial disparity in courses taken in preparation for college or career. In the current year’s data, of the 3,458 students who reported their race, 53 percent took core subjects. By race/ethnicity, 72 percent of white students took core subjects compared to 48 percent of African American students and 54 percent of Hispanic students.

### MKE 2014 Seniors:
**Percent Taking Core Subjects by Race/Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ACT, Inc., customized report
SCHOOL READINESS: INITIATIVES

Data from the metrics page reflect test scores for third graders in the fall of 2013. Milwaukee Succeeds Third Grade Reading Network launched its first tutoring pilot in 2013 and has continued to work with additional schools to implement and evaluate evidence-based strategies focused on improving third grade reading. Empowered with the data, relationships, and experience gained from those initiatives, Milwaukee Succeeds and our partners developed a comprehensive plan to scale those strategies to reach our 2020 goal to be one of the top urban school systems in third grade reading nationwide.

INITIATIVE 1: EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES RESULT IN IMPROVED READING OUTCOMES

ISSUE
Only 16 percent of third grade students in Milwaukee read at a proficient level, and many of our schools do not have strategies specifically focused on early reading skills.

PROJECT
The Milwaukee Succeeds Third Grade Reading Network partnered with several schools and community centers to pilot evidence-based initiatives in the 2014-15 school year - all with a focus on improving third grade reading outcomes. Each strategy targeted kindergarten to second grade students or their parents and each focused on early reading skills, which data confirmed was an area of need.

TUTORING
Milwaukee Succeeds promotes 1:1 tutoring that is research based; focused on skills that data indicate are weak; provides sufficient intensity to improve performance; uses trained and consistent tutors; has sufficient oversight to ensure fidelity of the program delivery; and utilizes pre- and post-testing to gauge progress.

To that end, Milwaukee Succeeds continued its partnership with the Milwaukee Academy of Science, where we implemented a 1:1 tutoring program in 2013 using trained volunteer tutors from Marquette University and University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. The school continued the tutoring program in 2014-15. Similar volunteer-based pilots were implemented at three additional sites in 2014-15: St. Catherine’s, Northwest Catholic School, and Gwen T. Jackson Early Childhood and Elementary School.
PARENT ENGAGEMENT
Milwaukee Succeeds partners are committed to providing parents with simple strategies they can use in daily interactions with their kindergarten-second grade children to reinforce early reading skills. Research shows that parents are more likely to follow through with such strategies if they are actually taught to use them as opposed to simply receiving information on paper.

Milwaukee Succeeds has worked with our partners to develop and deliver parent workshops to almost 500 parents at 25 different sites.

TEACHER COACHING
Milwaukee Succeeds partners recognized that effective classroom instruction is critical to our children's reading success. Research suggests that without follow-up and in-classroom coaching, teachers implement less than 5 percent of what they learn in traditional professional development; with effective coaching the implementation rate jumps to 80 percent. The network developed a coaching best practices framework informed by national research and local expertise.

Milwaukee Succeeds partnered with Milwaukee Public Schools, Northwestern Mutual, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to pilot a teacher coaching model referred to as Focus on Reading Foundations. Teachers received professional development on and materials to support early reading strategies, which is supplemented with ongoing 1:1 coaching in the classroom.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
Experiences that build vocabulary and develop conceptual understanding are also critical to successful reading comprehension. Milwaukee Succeeds has partnered with museums, art organizations and other cultural entities to support efforts to expand experiential opportunities to more students and to link those opportunities to reading through training and collaborations with tutoring programs. The Read to Succeed website is a resource for educators to find such offerings for their students. In addition, Cardinal Stritch University developed and delivered training for experiential providers that covers reading strategies they can incorporate into their programming.

PROGRESS
The outcomes from each of these pilot initiatives have been impressive and suggest that each of these initiatives is contributing to improved reading outcomes.

- A majority of students doubled their reading progress in less than two months of implementing coaching for teachers.
- 76 percent of parents who attended a workshop reported that they changed the way they read with their children.
- 30 percent of students in targeted tutoring improved one complete grade level on the reading assessment.
- Milwaukee Public Schools has embedded training on early reading strategies throughout its professional development.
- Non-MPS sites that started with tutoring programs are seeking coaching and professional development in foundational reading skills for their teachers.
LESSONS LEARNED:
• Strategies for social-emotional learning should be embedded into content training so that teachers can implement them seamlessly.
• The impact of the interventions is greater if schools are implementing multiple, aligned interventions.
• Tutored students made greater gains when the reading strategies were reinforced in the classroom.

Tutoring helps Malia, Lydia, and Desiree become kindergarten readers!

Data from pre and post tests showed that focused reading tutoring improved reading skills for kindergarten-second grade students at St. Catherine’s and Northwest Catholic schools. St. Catherine’s kindergarten students, Malia, Lydia, and Desiree, are evidence of that! All three girls started the year in the “below average” category, testing only at the 14 percent level.

• Desiree - first kindergarten student to complete all the tutoring lessons, soared to the 30th (average) percentile
• Lydia - rose to the 30th percentile, made everyone’s day when she picked up a new book during a school event and quietly read it aloud to her tutor
• Malia - always excited to come to tutoring, ended the year scoring in the 35th percentile

These girls are on their way to being great readers!
INITIATIVE 2: TRANSFORMATIVE READING INSTRUCTION (TRI) PROVIDES PATH TO 2020 GOAL

The Third Grade Reading Network used the findings from the pilot projects to refine the strategies and develop an aligned model for reaching the Milwaukee Succeeds goal to become a top performing urban school system by 2020.

TRI creates readers by providing intensive evidence-based coaching to K-second grade teachers on foundational reading and social emotional skills; this coaching is then aligned with tutoring, parent engagement workshops, and experiential learning opportunities. The model aligns partners in a school around a shared goal of improved outcomes for students. For example, in partnership with Milwaukee Succeeds, Clarke Street School strengthened existing systems in the 2014-15 school year by:

- Wrapping additional support around existing structures
- Increasing the focus on reading foundations by building the capacity of teachers
- Incorporating a social-emotional learning component into professional development
- Aligning these efforts with the existing SPARK 1:1 tutoring and parent engagement programs offered through the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee

"It has been exciting yet humbling to witness the confidence of our teachers and students as they grow in the area of foundational reading skills. The students are enjoying working with teachers and coaches as they develop in literacy. To witness this growth has been an amazing gift to Clarke Street School!"

Yolanda Tooks, School Support Teacher, Milwaukee Public Schools
PROGRESS
Clarke Street School is reporting large gains in the area of foundational reading:

- MAP and PALS scores have steadily increased and more students are moving into the proficient reading category
- First grade students made a 15.4 percent gap closure increase (as measured by MAP) – which is three times the district target of 5 percent
- The number of students scoring Significantly Above Target and On Target are increasing
- All other categories (Below Target, Well Below Target, and Significantly Below Target) are decreasing

Milwaukee Succeeds is implementing this model in seven schools across Milwaukee in the upcoming school year and plans to continue to refine the model and expand it to additional schools each year. The most exciting news is that this model is being embraced systemically by MPS. The TRI model has been the driving force behind the redesign of MPS’ district wide approaches to reading curriculum and instruction. TRI’s design has been the model for MPS’s concept-based curriculum, which has an emphasis on both foundational reading skills and transferable knowledge in all areas of literacy including reading, writing, language, speaking, and listening.

“Reading foundations was such a useful tool. It was perfect for working on my students’ foundational reading skills. I can definitely say that my class has a much stronger foundational base than last year.”

Katie Wirth, Teacher, Milwaukee Public Schools

“This Transformative Reading effort represents our community’s best opportunity to achieve the goal of becoming one of the top performing urban districts in reading because it is collaborative, innovative, evidenced-based and sustainable.”

Rachel Lander, Associate Scientist, UWM and Principal Researcher for TRI
SCHOOL READINESS: ACT INITIATIVE
INITIATIVE 3: ACT PREPARATION PILOT PROJECT

ISSUE
There is a significantly higher percentage of white students (38 percent) who scored proficient in all four ACT test areas than students of color (4.3 percent). Students selected for the ACT Preparation Pilot Project attend schools with a majority enrollment of students of color.

PROJECT
To begin addressing the ACT goals, a work group implemented a pilot project to provide best practice test preparation to help a group of juniors improve their scores on the mandatory state-wide test. Work group members engaged four Milwaukee high schools to participate in the project, one private school (Messmer High School) and three public (Morse Marshall School, Riverside University High School, and South Division High School). With the assistance of school staff and Milwaukee Succeeds volunteers, 578 students took an ACT pre-test (baseline), and almost half of those students participated in an ACT preparation workshop. The mandatory statewide test served as the post-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Total Juniors</th>
<th>Baseline Tested</th>
<th>Attended Workshop</th>
<th>Participation Rate</th>
<th>Baseline Comp Avg</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Messmer</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morse Marshall</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Division</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1066</strong></td>
<td><strong>578</strong></td>
<td><strong>285</strong></td>
<td><strong>49%</strong></td>
<td><strong>14.8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project included a letter to parents/guardians on the importance of sleep the night before the official test, and a well-balanced breakfast on test day. On the morning of the statewide test, volunteers read a reading prompt to students to help them mentally prepare for the long exam.
**Morse Marshall High School**

Betsy attributed her students’ positive experience to the opportunity to engage in ACT-related activities that help reduce the anxiety many students feel about tests like the ACT. Specifically, taking a practice (pre) test simulates both the format of the test and the procedures of the test day.

Betsy felt the ACT preparation sessions also helped to reduce testing anxiety. She described the test preparation sessions that took place after the pre-test but before the March third statewide exam as “awesome.” Gaining a better understanding of how they are being scored as well as learning simple test-taking strategies that, if employed, are likely to lead to more correct answers, students appreciated the opportunity to participate.

Moreover, participating in the Milwaukee Succeeds project fit well into the school’s recently increased efforts to create a college-going culture. Students are “seeing the connection between taking the test and their futures,” Betsy asserted. Indeed, after learning their March 3rd scores, many students immediately approached her to ask about retaking the test to try for even greater improvement. School wide, there is more focus on the ACT, including the goal of better preparing students for the test by being more intentional about the type of courses they choose. Due to their positive experience with this project, Betsy said she is very willing to represent the school in more Milwaukee Succeeds’ efforts.

It was a very positive experience for the students.”

Betsy McGinnity, 11th and 12th Grade School Counselor, Morse Marshall School

**SOUTH DIVISION HIGH SCHOOL**

School Support Teacher, Jose Trejo, also felt participation in the ACT project was helpful for the juniors he supports at South Division High School, where more than half of their population is English Language Learners. He said this experience was a good start for the students in understanding the importance of the test and getting exposure to it. According to Jose, the students benefitted most from learning more about the test structure and being introduced to some simple test-taking strategies.

Most noticeable for Jose was the increase in student participation in the mandatory testing. Though the test was in fact mandatory, Jose said many students simply stay home from school that day if they do not want to take the test. This year, however, more students took the test than in previous years. Further, according to his colleagues who administered the test, they observed higher overall engagement. There was a little less defeatism on the March 3rd test. Jose appreciated the opportunity to participate and would definitely be interested in other Milwaukee Succeeds’ projects.

“The ACT preparation sessions added value to the other things students are working on. It’s a good start in helping students understand the importance of the assessment. And once they understand the importance of it, they gain more intrinsic motivation.”

Jose Trejo, School Support Teacher, South Division High School
**NEXT STEPS**

We are awaiting post-test scores to see if the students improved, and whether workshop attendance made a difference for students who participated. With a focus on continuous improvement, the work group will use results to make appropriate adjustments moving forward as we help to align activities for another school year of ACT preparation in even more schools.

“It was very heartening to see so many students make the time to stay after school for the strategy workshops. They really do want to do well on the ACT and took advantage of the opportunity. Every principal was very gung ho about the pilot, in particular because of the connection to Milwaukee Succeeds.”

Edie Turnbull, Executive Director, College Possible and Chair of the Milwaukee Succeeds ACT Workgroup
GOAL 3: CAREER READINESS - METRICS

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE UTILIZE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OR TRAINING TO ADVANCE THEIR OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL AND PREPARE FOR A SUCCESSFUL CAREER.

It is expected that Wisconsin will generate 558,000 job vacancies between 2008 and 2018 requiring some type of postsecondary education or training. During that same period, it is estimated that only 70,000 jobs will be available for those with less than a high school degree (Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce: Projection of Jobs & Education Through 2018 - June 2010).

The number of Milwaukee residents with a postsecondary degree has improved steadily since 2011. Of the 101,582 25-34-year-olds in Milwaukee, 38 percent attained an associate degree or higher, up from 34 percent in the baseline year. And 30 percent of that same population attained a bachelor’s degree or higher, up from 28 percent in the baseline year.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP FOR ATTAINMENT

Milwaukee Succeeds successfully collaborated with the Greater Milwaukee Committee for a Lumina Foundation grant, which will help to accelerate the postsecondary efforts. As an awardee, we are one of multiple Community Partnership Attainment sites across the country.

Building on the work of Milwaukee Succeeds College and Career Readiness Network, this grant allows Milwaukee Succeeds to expand network connections already established to local institutes of higher education to collaboratively address critical areas that prevent students from enrolling in and completing postsecondary programs. The efforts will target students who are primarily low income and underrepresented minority youth from Milwaukee high schools. Under the guidance of the newly hired Career Readiness Goal Manager, the work will focus on system alignment by seeking input from multiple sectors, including K-12, postsecondary, and community partners. The work will also address sustainability by moving from student level to school wide strategies in order to create greater impact.
GOAL 4: SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL HEALTH - PROMOTING BEST PRACTICES
RECOGNIZING THE DIFFICULT ECONOMIC REALITIES FACING OUR FAMILIES, ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ARE HEALTHY, SUPPORTED Socially AND EMOTIONALLY AND CONTRIBUTE RESPONSIBLY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE MILWAUKEE COMMUNITY.

ADDRESSING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH THROUGH THE COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

ISSUE

Experiences of trauma and toxic stress in early childhood and throughout development are well-known causes of changes in brain chemistry, physiological functioning, and psychological well-being. This can lead to difficulty in a child’s ability to develop constructive coping strategies and are linked to life-long chronic diseases.

There is growing evidence that social and emotional learning can lessen the effects of toxic stress on children and promote healthy behaviors, well-being, and academic improvement. Research from more than 200 rigorous national studies shows that social and emotional learning provides a positive impact on the academic and behavioral outcomes of children in the areas of:

- **Improved academic performance** – students who received SEL training saw an 11 percent increase in their academic performance compared to students who received no training
- **Improved attitudes and behavior** – with SEL training, students showed a greater interest in learning and a stronger commitment to school. They spent more time on homework and their classroom behavior was better
- **Fewer negative behaviors** – schools implementing SEL training saw a decrease in negative classroom behavior and a decrease in discipline referrals
- **Reduced emotional distress** – students receiving SEL training reported fewer incidents of depression, anxiety, stress and social withdrawal
PROJECT

Grounded in the CASEL framework, the Community and Social Support Network established six broad strategies to improve social and emotional health in children, youth, and adults in the community:

• Implement SEL in schools in a comprehensive manner
• Coordinate SEL in after school programs across the city
• Establish a common language for programs adopting SEL
• Establish common ways to measure social-emotional health across broad sectors
• Develop a place-based approach to collaboration around SEL
• Initiate a communitywide campaign to educate the broader community about the benefits of SEL

PROGRESS

Integrating Best Practices: An Organizational Approach to SEL

America SCORES Milwaukee is the community outreach program of the Milwaukee Kickers Soccer Club. SCORES is dedicated to offering the children of Milwaukee’s central city after-school soccer programming. Incorporated with creative writing and community service components, SCORES is providing high quality youth-development to our community’s neediest children.

America SCORES MKE experienced significant success in helping children grow academically, physically, and socially, but quickly learned that a “one-size fits all” approach created problems when the organization decided to expand. It became apparent that behavioral issues were impeding SCORES coaches from teaching and SCORES kids from learning. Writing a poem cannot happen if the child collapses in a fit of rage when a fellow classmate sits in the wrong chair. A soccer game cannot be played if a child crumbles in tears when an opposing player takes the soccer ball away.

Hearing about CASEL through Milwaukee Succeeds, SCORES hired a professional associated with CASEL to create a new program for its first and second grade student participants, based on concepts learned from the CASEL framework and from other Milwaukee Succeeds partners. Now, SCORES new curricula provides students with social-emotionally based writing and soccer activities. Also, coaches and staff are trained to implement SEL in their classrooms.
Integrating Best Practices: A School-based Approach to SEL

Teachers and leaders at Milwaukee Public School’s Gwen T. Jackson Early Childhood and Elementary School recognized that students were making real progress in reading proficiency with the Milwaukee Succeeds teacher coaching and student tutoring initiatives. But they felt more progress was possible if staff had additional support in addressing many of the student behavioral issues that were evident during the school day.

Milwaukee Succeeds collaborated with a local partner and Community and Social Support Network member, Growing Minds, to work on students’ social-emotional needs. Growing Minds aims to empower students and teachers through the use of mindful awareness skills to create kinder learning environments and more caring school communities. Growing Minds instructors focus on the five core competencies of the CASEL framework: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships skills, and responsible decision-making.

At the end of the 10-week Growing Minds session, staff surveyed the teachers, most of whom were also participating in the Milwaukee Succeeds foundational reading skills teacher coaching initiative. Approximately 8 out of 10 teachers reported that the mindfulness practices were beneficial to students, including an increased ability in themselves and the students to “be more kind” and to “regulate emotions.”

Although Milwaukee Succeeds initiatives at Gwen T. Jackson School focused on children in grades K5 - second grade, Growing Minds staff also worked with third-fifth graders. Some of their comments illustrate the impact stronger SEL skills can have on young people.

“When someone makes me mad, now I listen before I talk.”
“Since using mindfulness, I haven’t had a panic attack in a while.”
“I was a wreck, but mindfulness helped me put it all together. Now I stop to think.”
“With mindfulness, people in my class are starting to realize what they are doing.”

Significant change takes a community effort. A fair amount of courage is required of leaders, organizations, and staff to embrace new ideas. My experience with the collaborative efforts of Milwaukee Succeeds partners has provided SCORES a network of like-minded people who are united in the effort to make Milwaukee a socially and emotionally healthy place to live. This is where change begins.”

Kate Carpenter, Executive Director, America SCORES-Milwaukee, and Milwaukee Succeeds CSSN Member

In short, SCORES has incorporated SEL components throughout the entire organization, and staff are seeing results. According to Junior SCORES coaches, after participating in the program:

- 76 percent of participants were better able to describe their feelings
- 71 percent of participants were better able to manage their emotions and behavior
CONCLUSION

Hundreds of groups are involved with Milwaukee Succeeds representing the very fabric of our city. This is a good start and we have made some important progress. But we must do more in order to achieve the kind of dramatic change it will take to ensure success for every child, cradle to career.

To achieve that level of success it will take no less than an **entire city supporting 165,000 children and young adults.** And the good news is that there is something each of us can do. Here are some examples:

- Become a tutor
- Volunteer in a school
- Read often to your children
- Seek out high quality child care for your child and ensure s/he is immunized
- Become a partner with your child’s teacher
- Sponsor trips to the library or to other learning adventures
- Learn more about social and emotional health and trauma-informed care
- Donate to a school or to a nonprofit supporting a school
- Support public policies that support schools

Please visit our website for more details on how you can get involved.

*“Acting on what matters is an act of leadership, it is not dependent on the leadership of others.”*

Peter Block, Author