

**Characteristics of a High
Performing Urban Classroom**
*Closing the Achievement Gaps in
Milwaukee Public Schools*



Milwaukee Public Schools

INTRODUCTION

Superintendent William G. Andrekopoulos

Milwaukee Public Schools is an urban school district dedicated to creating and sustaining high performing classrooms that are organized to meet the learning needs of all students. Recent data suggest that many of our classrooms are high performing. However, school specific data also suggest that each school has several disparities in student success. Overcoming the academic underperformance of students requires a systemic approach that includes all stakeholders if we are going to reduce the achievement gaps in the city of Milwaukee.

Milwaukee Public Schools previously developed and outlined the following five capacity builders that each school is responsible to develop and apply.

- A school functions as a **professional learning community** when everyone who has a stake shares the same mission, vision, and values.
- Each school develops **an educational plan** that is focused on the school's effort to improve student achievement.
- **Curriculum alignment** is a strategic approach that brings together standards, instruction, and assessment in a manner that facilitates greater coherence and consistency as well as stronger connections for all learners.
- **Fiscal responsibility** is demonstrated through a budget that aligns resources with a comprehensive, long-range educational plan and spending is allocated in accordance with such a plan.
- **Shared decision making** is a process of making educational decisions in a collaborative manner at the school level, ensuring that schools are more responsible to the needs of their students and community.



*Milwaukee Public Schools
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The district is committed to providing a positive learning environment for students from diverse backgrounds in order to eliminate disparities in student achievement. In this booklet, Milwaukee Public Schools, working with the Milwaukee Partnership Academy, identifies the eight characteristics of high performing urban classrooms and articulates expectations for the schools and district support to ensure that all classrooms are high performing and all student are achieving.

William G. Andrekopoulos

CONNECTIONS

MILWAUKEE PARTNERSHIP ACADEMY

The purpose of the Milwaukee Partnership Academy is to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Milwaukee Public Schools. The broad initiative of the MPA is to ensure that every child in Milwaukee Public Schools is performing at or above grade level in reading, writing, and mathematics through shared responsibility for student success. The framework for the initiative is balanced literacy and mathematics. The comprehensive literacy program provides skill development across all curricular areas and focuses on reading, writing, listening, speaking, deep thinking, and research skills. The comprehensive mathematics program provides students an **understanding** of mathematical concepts, an ability to accurately and appropriately **compute**, an ability to solve mathematical problems by **applying** concepts, an ability to provide **reasoning** to solutions to problems, and an ability to see mathematics as **useful and doable**.



WISCONSIN STANDARDS FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND LICENSURE

- 1 Teachers know the subjects they are teaching.** The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the disciplines he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for pupils.
- 2 Teachers know how children grow.** The teacher understands how children with broad ranges of ability learn and provides instruction that supports their intellectual, social, and personal development.
- 3 Teachers understand that children learn differently.** The teacher understands how pupils differ in their approaches to learning and the barriers that impede learning and can adapt instruction to meet the diverse needs of pupils, including those with disabilities and exceptionalities.
- 4 Teachers know how to teach.** The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies, including the use of technology, to encourage children's development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
- 5 Teachers know how to manage a classroom.** The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- 6 Teachers communicate well.** The teacher uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques as well as instructional media and technology to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
- 7 Teachers are able to plan different kinds of lessons.** The teacher organizes and plans systematic instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, pupils, the community, and curriculum goals.
- 8 Teachers know how to test for student progress.** The teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the pupil.
- 9 Teachers are able to evaluate themselves.** The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on pupils, parents, professionals in the learning community and others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
- 10 Teachers are connected with other teachers and the community.** The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support pupil learning and well being and acts with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.

WISCONSIN STANDARDS FOR ADMINISTRATOR DEVELOPMENT AND LICENSURE

To receive a license in a school administrator category in Wisconsin, an applicant shall complete an approved program in school administration and demonstrate proficient performance in the knowledge, skills and dispositions under all of the following standards.

- 1** The administrator has an understanding of and demonstrates competence in the Ten Teacher Standards.
- 2** The administrator leads by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared by the school community.
- 3** The administrator manages by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to pupil learning and staff professional growth.
- 4** The administrator ensures management of the organization, operations, finances, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- 5** The administrator models collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- 6** The administrator acts with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
- 7** The administrator understands, responds to, and interacts with the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context that affects schooling.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNERS

Teachers empower students to achieve at their highest levels. Teachers use in-depth knowledge of content areas and a literacy-based focus to facilitate students' active engagement in learning.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 3, 6

EVIDENCE:

Students

- Share responsibility for assessing their progress.
- Construct knowledge by interpreting, analyzing and evaluating information.
- Use high levels of critical thinking skills.
- Are engaged in classroom activities.
- Seek knowledge beyond what has been taught during the day and share their knowledge.
- Are responsive with explanations, make connections and provide examples.
- Have opportunities to work on long-term projects of their own design.
- Know how to participate in different modalities.
- Take on different roles in learning. Students debate/discuss, problem solve, etc.
- Connect the topic under study to their own lives or similar situations in life outside of school.
- Demonstrate engagement and self-control in teacher led and independent activities.
- Follow established routines and procedures.

Teachers

- Provide learning activities that are meaningful and challenge all students, including English Language Learners (ELL) and students with disabilities.
- Use technology regularly to foster student engagement in learning.
- Use open-ended questions to foster critical thinking.
- Plan units of instruction that involve students in complex projects requiring that content be addressed in unique ways.
- Design materials and activities that spark discussion and active participation.
- Present information in all modalities.
- Are enthusiastic about content and knowledge.
- Structure classroom environment to support active engagement in learning and a dynamic classroom where multiple learning groups are in action.
- Support and maintain a safe and orderly classroom environment.
- Develop routines and procedures to facilitate active engagement in learning.
- Draw from families' and communities' knowledge and experience to encourage and sustain student engagement.

Supporting Research

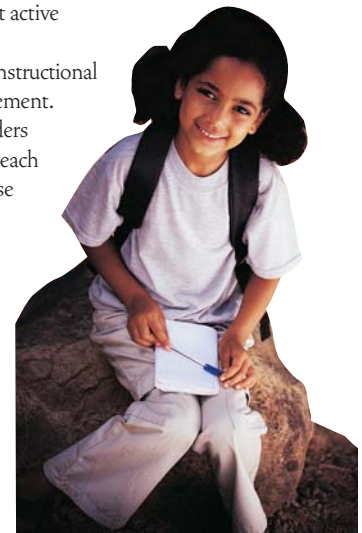
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School

- Provides staff development activities that address specific content area issues and allow for "hands-on" trial and evaluation of specific techniques.
- Conducts walk-throughs and provides feedback on student engagement.
- Provides time to reflect and plan activities that enhance student engagement.
- Provides students with training on the dynamics of motivation and efficacy.
- Holds staff accountable for providing activities that lead to student engagement.

Central Services Support

- Model reflective feedback and facilitative skills
- Empower school leaders to provide face-to-face and on-line professional development.
- Provide teachers with feedback based on professional standards and provide for self-evaluation according to standards.
- Provide resources that support active engagement.
- Provide reports to schools on instructional strategies that enhance engagement.
- Equip teachers and school leaders with skills and knowledge to teach challenging content to a diverse student body.



CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Teachers know the diverse racial, ethnic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of their students and embed this knowledge throughout the curriculum to foster high levels of student learning.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 7

EVIDENCE:

Students

- Demonstrate genuine caring, acceptance, and respect for all people.
- Are sensitive to different cultural viewpoints, backgrounds, languages, and perspectives.
- Trust teachers and feel respected.
- Make connections between new knowledge and their own life experiences.
- Contribute ideas for how to develop and maintain a safe, orderly, and productive classroom environment.
- Share stories, values, and meanings of tradition within their own culture and compare and contrast them to other cultures.
- Feel safe expressing their own cultural identity, including sexual orientation, linguistic ability, etc.

Teachers

- Are respectful of students' first languages.
- Draw from students' cultural backgrounds and experiences to connect to the curriculum.
- Create a classroom environment where students are able to discuss differences and inequities, and strive for social justice.
- Demand, encourage, and commit to the learning of all students.
- Demonstrate understanding of cultural differences represented by students and families in the Milwaukee area.
- Build relationships with and respond to the needs of students across all cultural groups via interpersonal and nonverbal communication.
- Are critically aware of their own cultural identity and the ways it permeates their world views.
- Use materials that represent students' diverse backgrounds.

School

- Creates an environment of cultural respect and trust.
- Purchases instructional materials that reflect students' cultures and experiences.
- Provides forums for students, staff and families to discuss issues of race, class, and culture.
- Involves students in programs that directly increase the number of educational experiences they have both in and outside of school.
- Provides disaggregated data to recognize and deal with any achievement gaps existing between groups, including race, ethnicity, language, gender, and ability.
- Provides professional development to ensure understanding of cultural differences and their implications to ensure effective teaching and learning for all students.
- Identifies cultural expectations of the student and parent population and demonstrates an ongoing commitment to learn about their culture.

Central Services Support

- Provide face-to-face and on-line professional development.
- Promote cultural responsiveness by modeling appropriate administrative practice.
- Provide teachers with feedback based on professional standards and provide for self-evaluation according to standards.
- Provide cultural resources on-line and at district resource centers.
- Facilitate the selection of district-funded purchases that represent the cultures of all students.

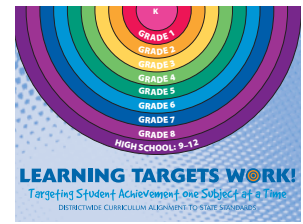


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HIGH EXPECTATIONS BASED ON LEARNING TARGETS

Teachers and students hold and communicate high expectations for complex student learning based on the MPS Learning Targets.



Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 3, 6

EVIDENCE:

Students

- Know the Learning Target being addressed.
- Summarize new content.
- Produce work that reflects high expectations.
- Apply learning to new situations.
- Engage in deep thinking using upper levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.
- Do work that is challenging but not frustrating.

Teachers

- Set high expectations for all students, including those with disabilities and English Language Learners.
- Align curriculum to Learning Targets.
- Assure that every Learning Target is taught to appropriate depth of knowledge.
- Provide grade level work that goes beyond worksheet and textbook questions and answers.
- Provide lessons in a clear manner where students are challenged but not overwhelmed.
- Begin instructional units by presenting clear learning goals based on the Learning Targets.
- Ask students questions to activate, recall, and make links to prior knowledge before presenting a lesson.
- Provide multiple ways for students to organize new content.
- Provide accelerated work beyond Learning Targets when appropriate.
- Assess student progress via multiple forms of high quality classroom assessments based on the Learning Targets.
- Maintain healthy emotional objectivity about all students by monitoring own attitudes about students.
- Encourage all students to participate and discuss, regardless of their past performance or teacher perceptions of their abilities.
- Motivate students by displaying student work related to Learning Targets.

School

- Discusses the meaning of high expectations and identifies strategies to achieve them.
- Checks that teachers address all essential content.
- Organizes and sequences essential content.
- Maximizes instructional time by minimizing interruptions and non-scheduled non-instructional activities.
- Reviews MPS Learning Targets when developing its Educational Plan each year to ensure continuity and expectations captured in its SMART Goals.
- Ensures all educators can accurately identify cognitive level of grade-level Learning Targets and design a variety of engaging instructional approaches to meet students' needs.
- Structures dialogue with parents, students and community members around the expectations and evidence of the Learning Targets.
- Supports team meetings to ensure continuity in curriculum development and mapping to support learning based on the MPS Learning Targets.
- Provides consistent school-wide approach to student discipline.
- Provides professional development activities based on student needs.

Central Services Support

- Provide Learning Targets aligned to the state assessment framework to teachers, students, and parents.
- Provide face-to-face and on-line professional development.
- Provide teachers with feedback based on professional standards and provide for self-evaluation according to standards.
- Monitor, support, and ensure compliance including special education legislation and No Child Left Behind.
- Provide samples of valid classroom-based assessments.
- Implement the Educational Plan Review process.



Supporting Research

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STRATEGIC INSTRUCTIONAL CHOICES

Teachers ensure that all students are meaningfully challenged. Teachers strategically select methods, differentiate instruction, and use technology to foster student learning.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 3

EVIDENCE:

Students

- Engage in teacher-directed, teacher-guided, and independent learning activities in all content areas.
- Know how to help each other.
- Represent new concepts in non-linguistic ways, such as mental images, pictures, pictographs, graphic organizers, physical models, and enactments.
- Engage in teaching one another – reading, explaining, and discussing with each other.
- Revise and correct errors in notes in order to review content.
- Engage in activities that test hypotheses.
- Are given regular opportunities to make choices, i.e., books, writing topics, team members or research projects.
- Use technology to enhance learning the curriculum.

Teachers

- Modify instruction based on ongoing assessment of students' progress.
- Demonstrate knowledge of content and multiple ways of making it meaningful to students.
- Ensure students have multiple exposures to new content presented in a variety of forms.
- Design and adapt curriculum for individual student needs, including ELL students and students with disabilities.
- Organize students into cooperative groups as appropriate.
- Make clear distinctions between skills and processes that are to be mastered versus skills and processes that are to be experienced.
- Organize examples into categories or groups that demonstrate the essential features of the content.
- Assign in-class and homework tasks so that students can practice important skills and processes.
- Assign work that compares and classifies.
- Construct metaphors and analogies.
- Use the comprehensive literacy and mathematics frameworks in the classroom.
- Are aware of different academic and behavior needs of students and provide for those needs, always taking into consideration students' sociocultural, linguistic and economic backgrounds.
- Use technology to improve, monitor and vary instruction.
- Draw upon families' knowledge and life experiences to enhance student learning in all content areas.

School

- Encourages and monitors use of technology and provides technology resources.
- Ensures that the Learning Team provides opportunities for feedback and discussion on teachers' instructional choices.
- Ensures that Learning Team provides opportunities for discussion and refinement of instructional choices.
- Ensures that Literacy Coaches and Math Teacher Leaders model instructional practices.
- Communicates a shared philosophy about teaching and learning.
- Revises teaching and learning strategies incorporated through their Educational Plan, based on SMART Goals.
- Shares resources through the library media center that have been carefully selected to support diverse instructional methods.
- Provides opportunities for grade level, or subject area meetings as well as vertical teaming to facilitate collaborative review of student work and use of classroom assessments based on standards.
- Supports action research, seeks constant improvement and designs modifications to meet all students' learning needs.

Central Services Support

- Identify key strategies to improve student achievement.
- Conduct face-to-face and on-line professional development targeting instructional choices.
- Provide teachers with feedback based on professional standards and provide for self-evaluation according to standards.
- Support the Educational Plan review process.
- Monitor, provide support, and ensure compliance including special education legislation and No Child Left Behind.
- Support the positions of Literacy and Math specialists, Literacy Coaches, and Math Teacher Leaders.
- Collaboratively create curriculum guides/syllabi to guide classroom instruction and assessment.
- Construct curriculum maps that serve as documentation of instructional success and identify areas in need of refinement, as measured by a variety of timely data sources.
- Provide technology, infrastructure and support for instruction.

Supporting Research

Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (www.crede.org)

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ROUTINE USE OF A VARIETY OF ASSESSMENTS

Teachers and students use multiple sources of data to assess progress and guide the effectiveness of instruction.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 2, 7, 8, 9
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 4

EVIDENCE:

Students

- Analyze both formal and informal assessment data to monitor their personal growth.
- Participate in student-led conferences and can explain their own work.
- Keep track of their own performance on learning goals.
- End instructional units with self-assessment relative to learning goals.
- Identify challenging goals for their own learning.
- Use data to test assumptions about own learning.

Teachers

- Engage in self-reflection on their own practice in order to enhance their effectiveness.
- Analyze assessment data to identify patterns of student performance and needs.
- Teach students how to guide their own learning by providing ongoing feedback.
- Provide timely feedback to students and parents on in-class work and homework.
- Systemically recognize students who make observable progress on learning goals.
- End instructional units by providing students with clear feedback on the learning goals.
- Use assessments to inform and improve instruction.
- Use assessments that are meaningful and reliable.
- Are aware that assessment instruments can be culturally biased and use multiple assessment strategies to more thoroughly evaluate student progress (e.g., projects, portfolios, etc.).
- Seek input from families on ways of developing informal assessment strategies.

School

- Supports staff in using multiple assessment strategies.
- Provides all student-related data in a timely manner.
- Provides time for teachers to plan and reflect.
- Provides training on data interpretation and use.
- Provides common assessments that are used at least every 9 weeks and time to reflect on results.
- Sets specific achievement goals for the school.
- Uses performance on school-wide and individual goals to plan for future years.

Central Services Support

- Provide training on data analysis and assessment.
- Make student performance and perception data available to schools.
- Provide teachers with feedback based on professional standards and provide for self-evaluation according to standards.
- Provide professional development on the use of data to improve student outcomes, reduce the achievement gaps, and evaluate strategies and interventions.
- Provide technology solutions to support school-based inquiry.
- Establish benchmarks for proficient student work across grade levels and content areas.
- Monitor, provide support and ensure compliance including special education legislation and No Child Left Behind.
- Provide data to schools in a timely manner.



Supporting Research

Authentic Education – Grant Wiggins and Associates, TA <http://www.grantwiggins.org>

Fairtest: The National Center for Fair and Open Testing, *Performance assessment annotated bibliography*. <http://www.fairtest.org/perfbib.html>

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PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY

Teachers initiate, develop and maintain positive working relationships with all students' families and the broader urban community to support student learning.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 7, 9, 10
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Families

- Participate in school activities.
- Are aware of and understand what their child should learn at each grade level.
- Provide input and feedback to teachers.
- Support student learning by providing homework place and support.
- Use family activities to extend learning.
- Communicate to school important information that could affect student learning.

Teachers

- Are aware that families want the best for their children.
- Identify and use resources located near the school and the community at large to foster student learning.
- Identify and use resources located near the school and the community at large to build students' appreciation of their own community and the broader community.
- Engage the families of all students in the education of their children on a regular basis even when students do not live in the neighborhood.
- Value the cultures and communities of their students and use them as a foundation to foster new student learning.
- Actively build positive relationships with families and maintain those relationships throughout the year.
- Welcome family members whose first language is not English and make arrangements for interpreting.
- Work collaboratively with families of students with disabilities to meet the goals of the students' IEP.
- Provide educational activities that families can do together at home.



School

- Provides opportunities for parents and the community to be involved in the day-to-day operations and governance of the school and improve student learning.
- Provides training for parents to support student achievement.
- Regularly provides information on Learning Targets and assessments to parents.
- Creates vehicles to communicate regularly with parents, including translating all notices into families' first language.
- Encourages communication and interaction with families, including making arrangements for interpreters as appropriate.
- Regularly seeks feedback from families.
- Creates a climate of respect for all parents, including those who do not live in the neighborhood.
- Includes parent and community members in school decision making.
- Provides parents with ideas and resources to support and stretch student learning.
- Includes families in professional development of targeted SMART goals.
- Displays student work and provide opportunities for students to perform in the community (concerts, art exhibitions, student speeches, science fair).
- Encourages staff to contact parents (phone, e-mail, homework hotlines, home visits, etc.) to provide ongoing communication, feedback, and support.

Central Services Support

- Support collaborative, facilitative leadership throughout the district.
- Provide face-to-face and on-line professional development.
- Provide teachers with feedback based on professional standards and provide for self-evaluation according to standards.
- Coordinate after-school academics, including CLC's, Supplemental Services, Homework First, and Summer School.
- Report school and district performance and financial data for community use.
- Provide customer service training.
- Maintain parent support/information center and provide materials in families' first language.

Supporting Research

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COLLABORATION WITH COLLEAGUES

Teachers develop and maintain productive professional working relationships with colleagues to enhance student learning.

**Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 9,10
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 6,7**

EVIDENCE:

Students

- Demonstrate high achievement across all grade levels.
- Are continually challenged across all grade levels.
- Seek help from any staff member.
- Share materials and ideas with teachers and classmates.
- Function as effective team members to accomplish tasks.

Teachers

- Respect the diverse cultural identities, ways of knowing and modes of communication of their colleagues.
- Value colleagues and work collaboratively with them to address concerns, solve problems, and create strategies to achieve common goals.
- Support each other's professional development and growth, especially that of new teachers.
- Work collaboratively to analyze student work and study lesson design.
- Use cooperative, collaborative activities to develop classroom as an interdependent community.
- Work in teams to improve school climate and student learning.
- Observe and learn from colleagues who model good teaching and good classroom management.



School

- Supports induction of new teachers.
- Develops a collective commitment to success and continuous improvement.
- Practices shared decision-making.
- Establishes norms for conduct that foster collegiality and professionalism among all staff.
- Establishes governance structures that allow for teacher involvement.
- Focuses staff meeting time on meaningful pursuits designed to enhance student learning and the learning environment.
- Supports teacher networking opportunities to broaden knowledge base of content and teaching/learning strategies.
- Engages professional staff in the development of all phases of the Educational Plan.
- Develops and consistently implements shared school-wide expectations for student behavior.

Central Services Support

- Support collaborative and facilitative leadership throughout the district.
- Embed reflective practice within district via coaching skills.
- Provide teachers with feedback based on professional standards and provide for self-evaluation according to standards.
- Coordinate sharing of best practice across district.
- Monitor, provide support, and ensure compliance including special education legislation and No Child Left Behind.
- Share expertise with other schools and district to help others reach their capacity.

Supporting Research

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DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, Indiana: National Educational Services.

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IMPASSIONED, ENGAGED ADULT LEARNERS

Teachers are invested adult learners who motivate their students to become impassioned, engaged learners.

EVIDENCE:

Students

- Are regularly exposed to materials and strategies that expand beyond textbooks.
- Explain what they will learn, why they are learning it, and what meaning it has in their lives.
- Feel that they have a meaningful and caring relationship with the teacher.
- Challenge themselves to mastery and beyond.
- Talk about the enthusiasm of their teacher.
- Feel safe and comfortable taking risks within the classroom environment.
- Understand that high academic achievement does not entail sacrificing their own cultural identity.

Teachers

- Engage students in the meaning of learning.
- Exhibit enthusiasm about the subjects they teach.
- Engage students in setting goals for learning.
- Use professional resources regularly (professional literature, Literacy Coaches, and Math Teacher Leaders) to modify instruction that enhances student learning.
- Share their learning with students.
- Operate from a framework of continuous lifelong learning.
- Participate in action research as a way of learning from practice.
- Ensure that students see them engaged in their own learning and knowledge development, such as ongoing utilization of library media center resources.



Supporting Research

- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1993). *Inside/outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- DuFour, R., & Eaker, R. (1998). *Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement*. Bloomington, Indiana: National Educational Services.
- Hammerness, K., Darling-Hammond, L., & Bransford, J. (2005). How teachers learn and develop. In L. Darling-Hammond & J. Bransford (Eds.), *Preparing teachers for a changing world: What teachers should learn and be able to do* (pp. 358-389). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (Eds.). (2001) *Teachers caught in the action: Professional development that matters. The series on school reform*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Marzano, R. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Southwest Education Development Laboratory. (1997). *Professional learning communities: What are they and why are they important?* <http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues61.html>
- Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. (2005). *Best practice, third edition: Today's standards for teaching & learning in America's schools*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 3, 4



School

- Provides time for teachers to practice the precepts of a professional learning community.
- Supports work of Math Teacher Leader and Literacy Coach in providing embedded professional development.
- Provides professional resources to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
- Supports reflective practice and professional development.
- Supports internal and external professional development opportunities focused on school SMART goals and meeting the differentiated needs of individuals in the school community.
- Provides relevant professional development on banking days.
- Provides regular time and space for teachers to share and learn from each other.
- Includes parents in a variety of educational experiences, including parents who do not live in the neighborhood.

Central Services Support

- Support collaborative and facilitative leadership throughout district.
- Support Learning Team training on reflective practice and coaching skills.
- Provide teachers with feedback based on professional standards and provide for self-evaluation according to standards.
- Provide face-to-face and on-line professional development.
- Provide a pool of well-qualified teachers and administrators.
- Build embedded professional development around experiential activities rather than lecture only.
- Regularly inform staff of relevant professional development opportunities.

Milwaukee Public Schools **CORE BELIEFS**

Children Come First

Children are the center of the decision-making process.
We have high expectations and standards for all children.
Supportive services are provided to enable children to reach their full potential.
Equitable allocation of resources supports learning.

The Classroom is the Most Important Place in the District

Every child has an equitable opportunity to learn with an effective teacher.
Collaboration among staff promotes high levels of student achievement using best practices.
Professional development is embedded in the classroom.
Resources are directed to the classroom and focused on student achievement.

Leadership and Accountability are Keys to Our Success

Leadership articulates the vision and moves the organization forward.
Accountability holds us to high standards and expectations.
Principals are leaders in improving schools.
Every teacher is a leader and every leader is a teacher to ensure student success.

Central Services Supports Student Achievement

Central Services promotes and supports student achievement.
Central Services articulates an academic framework.
Central Services facilitates communication throughout the district and community using a variety of techniques.
Central Services holds school accountable through an evaluation system.

Families are Valuable Partners

Families support and assist us in educating their children.
We welcome and respect family involvement.
Opportunities are provided for parents to participate in key decision-making.
Communication between families and MPS personnel is important.

Community Partnerships Add Value

Community partnerships extend learning beyond the classroom.
Shared responsibility fosters student success.
The Milwaukee community and Milwaukee Public Schools value and support partnerships to increase capacity for teaching and learning.



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