



### **Our Mission**

The purpose of the Milwaukee Partnership Academy (MPA) is to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). The broad initiative of the MPA is to ensure that every child in the 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: a comprehensive literacy program that provides skill development across all curricular areas and focuses on reading, writing, listening, speaking, deep thinking, and research skills; a comprehensive mathematics program that 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.

### **MPA Implementation Team Meeting Minutes from May 11, 2009**

Pat Ellis, Stritch	Ron Fancher, MATC	Beth Giles, UW System
Amy Johnson, MTEA	Joe Kmoch, MTEC	Mike Langyel, MTEA
Tom McGinnity, MTEC	Dennis Oulahan, MTEA	Gloria Pitchford-Nicholas, MATC
Linda Post, UWM	Lee Ann Pruske, MPS	Beth Schefelker, MPS
Ruth Short, UWM	Betty Smith, Milwaukee Catalyst	Dave Weingrod, MPS

Guests: Tom Morgan (MTEA), Evan Davies, (Americorps VISTA/MPS), and 6 MPS high school students (from Washington LEAPs and Washington ELOB)

### **Meeting with MPS Students**

Several students from all grade levels at the Washington High School Campus were invited to attend the meeting today to share their voice concerning their education at MPS. This was done through a Q & A format.

### **What has worked in your education?**

- A small school setting where students can get to know teachers—that's positive
- Teaching techniques that promote learning through the senses and use multiple senses
- Activities with school staff—getting to know them and trust them

**What has not worked (in your education)?**

- The teaching style used when the teacher was so frustrated because of constantly disruptive students talking during class—had a negative effect on others’ abilities to learn and remain engaged
- Teacher inflexibility to change what they plan to teach when necessary
- Repeating material already learned; however, brief review of previous material to refresh the memory as needed is okay
- Getting assigned classes that are not needed

**Have any of you ever received an incident referral, and if so, was it for something you did or written just to get you out of the class?**

- Several students replied “yes” for what they felt was the latter reason

**For those who have been in both large comprehensive and small high schools, what is your impression of what happens to you in each setting?**

- In the large high school, there tends to be more staff in the classroom and/or more opportunity for extra help if needed
- In the large high school, students are easily overlooked, especially if they are not sports figures or scholars, etc.; whereas in the small schools everybody knows everybody and there is a connection with someone in the building—know teachers/people can talk to about anything

**What is the average class size in your small high school?**

- 10-15 students per class
- There were approximately 20 students per class; however most days now it ranges from 2-15—think many have dropped out and many only attend when there is an incentive such as for field trips, dances, etc.

**What is the physical layout of your building containing three schools and how do you interact with students in the other schools?**

- The schools occupy different floors
- Different lunch hours for each school
- Don’t interact except for sports—all play on same team
- It is possible to take some classes offered on other floors

**What would you stop doing (in your education)?**

- Stop keeping the disrupters in class
- Stop teachers from criticizing students—students don’t want to ask for help because teachers criticize them for not knowing what they are doing

### **What would you do instead (in your education)?**

- Keep the disrupters out for the rest of the class period after being sent out rather than sending them back in
- Have someone students can go to when feel being treated unfairly by teachers
- Have a better and more high-tech security system

### **If you were creating a new school, what is one thing that you would put into it?**

- Teachers that make it click inside us when they teach and make teaching/learning fun and easy
- Teachers that we can understand and who help us learn how to do things
- Teachers that don't sit in front of the classroom and just talk
- Teachers that see if you need help and give it to you
- Rules that must be followed consistently and mean something
- Parents involved -- family-oriented with teachers a part of it
- Journalism
- Resources like computer labs
- New and fun classes that you wouldn't experience somewhere else, like photography or archery for example
- Backup tools such as notebooks, pencils, etc.—supplies that students need but can't all afford to buy (A previous school had a mobile bookstore that came around through the halls selling items at very cheap prices. Some students feel they need to hustle money to get what they need or don't ask for help because of pride.)

### **How do your great teachers deal with classroom disruption?**

- Gaining the students' respect and being a likable teacher eliminates much classroom disruption and gets a positive response when students are nicely asked to please quiet down or lower their voices
- Ignores them unless they talk over him or affect the class—he then calls security and goes right back to teaching

### **What are some of the characteristics of the teachers you particularly like and respect?**

- Caring -- teachers who care about students, care that they do well and pull students aside that are falling behind or failing and try to find out what is keeping them from getting it and what can do to help them learn, graduate, etc.
- Helps students develop into a good student/person
- Good personality
- Ability to connect with the students
- Sense of humor -- joke around a bit with students
- Down-to-earth

- Friendly -- talk to students outside of class
- Motherly-type personality
- Attends school functions

**What does their class look like?**

- Classroom has a smartboard, posters and pictures of students
- Class begins with a warm-up to refresh the memory and class time is broken down into sections
- Students sometimes sit in a circle around the teacher and everyone can see each other
- If students have a wrong answer, it is handled in a way that doesn't make them feel bad
- Students are shown where the mistake was made and how to do it correctly

**Did you ever have a teacher you did not like?**

- Yes – one we couldn't relate to; no emotional connection – it's harder academically when can't bond with the teacher
- Yes – one with real old school attitudes and procedures—teacher just talks and students just take notes and do worksheets

**When you graduate from high school what are your hopes dreams, aspirations and goals?**

- Go to college and eventually own a restaurant
- Don't know for sure yet—have interest in being a doctor or dentist
- Like to build and like airplanes – maybe build airplanes
- Don't know for sure yet—interested in a lot—mortician, child care and more
- Use the skills I have to work in a large building and answer phones/do administrative assistant type work
- Play a sport or do sports analysis

**Do you think the education you are receiving is helping you to achieve those hopes, dreams, aspirations and goals?**

- Yes, because ever since middle school I have had guidance counselors and teachers adding to the support of my step-parents, making sure I have all the classes I need and am getting done what needs to be done and having all things in order to accomplish my goals
- Yes, because the things I am being taught now I knew in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade
- No, not really—it may help some, but not fulfill; what would help is exposure to areas of career interest and hands-on experience
- Yes, because of classes like keyboarding and experience gained in answering phones in school

- Yes and No:
  - Yes, because have a public speaking class
  - No, because you have to get the basic classes and in college sometimes they have classes just for a certain area

**What does it take in order to pursue higher learning and how are you preparing yourself?**

- At least 20 hours of experience working in a professional kitchen is needed to enroll in culinary arts, and I have tried looking for places where I can volunteer
- Accuplacer test was taken—need to take a math class over the summer to strengthen math

**What do you think motivates you as a learner to hang in there and keep going when you face battles/challenges/disruptions?**

- My grandmother who graduated from college working four jobs and taking care of me and my brother (she set a standard; don't want to let her down)
- My daddy who has worked hard and told me to go to school and graduate because it will take me far in life
- My grandmother who gives me support and teaches me good life skills such as treating others as I want to be treated

**What can we do to strengthen relationships between parents and schools/teachers?**

- Need more advance notice about things at least weeks or months ahead of time; when get last-minute notifications, parents already have other plans or can't get off work

**What would you say to new teachers who will begin teaching in the fall?**

- You can't change your past, but can change your future; as long as you are doing what you need to do and have the paperwork, you will always have something to fall back on
- If students are being bad or disruptive, don't get too carried away with it
- Don't spoil/cancel good things such as field trips, etc., for all if one or a few students mess up
- Don't do things that make students dislike you
- Be yourself; be real; do your job and stay positive
- Smile at the students, ask how they are doing and show that you care

**Do you think students are disruptive because they don't understand or don't have their work done?**

- Many times this is probably so, but also think it is because of:
  - How the person is at home

- Home life—how parents deal with their children at home affects how they act in school
- No secure foundation at home
- Lack of parental involvement/care

Other

- **MPA Interim Executive Director Position & Needs Assessment** – Negotiations are in progress with Co-Executive Director candidates and a needs assessment is being conducted. Please answer any questions if you are contacted.

**Next Meeting** – Monday, **June 8, 2009** at Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (MAWIB), 2342 North 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 116, **from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.** (lunch at 11:30).