



MILWAUKEE PARTNERSHIP ACADEMY MONTHLY REPORT October 2008

- Leadership Team members put together a committee of broadly based individuals to plan a two-day retreat on Learning Teams. This planning committee met on October 20th and reviewed history concerning Learning Teams, identified data and discussed possible revisions, discussed ideas, developed goals, identified necessary participants and began planning for the retreat. Dates have been set for November 24 and December 15, 2008. Retreat participants will include principals, classroom teachers, Learning Team members, Math Teacher Leaders, Math Teaching Specialists, Literacy Coaches, Literacy Specialists, Curriculum Generalists, Implementation Team and Work Group members and other individuals. One of the primary goals of the retreat is to generate characteristics of a high performing Learning Team.
- School leaders are engaging their Learning Teams in self-reflective conversation during October and November and have been given three tools to help them do this: 1) the MPA Learning Teams rubric, 2) the capacity-building rubric for professional learning communities, and 3) the mathematics learning team continuum. Results of these conversations will be used to continue their growth.
- Under the goal of Induction, the Teacher & Principal Quality Work Group will continue with development of “out of the box” ways of thinking about mentoring; the mentor database for MRP, MTEC and City-wide Mentors; and review of the Virtual Induction Program (VIP) to make sure it is aligned with all other induction supports and will conduct further conversations as necessary. Under the goal of learning teams, coordination of PDP development, verification and implementation, and validation support services will be added, connecting this work to the learning teams work and leadership conference.
- The *Teacher Induction for Urban Education Handbook, Revised Edition* was distributed and copies of the DVD on Learning Teams, *Transforming Schools through Learning Teams*, were available at the October Instructional Leadership Conference for school leaders. A range of different sessions were also held at MPS to provide information for school leaders, new teachers, teacher leaders and the district and school-based mentors concerning induction. Sessions will continue to be offered throughout the year. School leaders are creating induction plans.
- Representatives from universities, alternative certification and MPS continue to meet to address challenges and make sure efforts are consistent across the board and continue to benefit new teachers in terms of retention long-term.

- Through the Family Literacy & Tutoring initiative, three tutor training sessions with approximately 65 tutors were conducted at Marquette and UWM and the first corporate tutor training session at Manpower Inc.
- The Skunkworks Work Group has met with a number of students and staff to find out how best to access students and their input and discussed ideas. Students also spoke out on various issues. The intended outcome is to include student voices in conversations about how to make teaching and learning more effective. Information on this was shared with the Implementation Team and further ideas were suggested and discussed by the Team and work group members.
- Antonio Rodriguez, Acting MPS Science Curriculum Specialist, shared information with the Implementation Team about the plans for the recently awarded \$1.3 million grant from the State for science, Project BEST (Better Elementary Science Teaching), and received feedback from the Team. The goals of the project are:
 - To increase the science content knowledge of MPS elementary grade level teachers (K-8) and improve student achievement in science
 - To increase teacher pedagogical content knowledge and use of effective standards-based science teaching methodologies, curriculum and assessments (i.e. PCK; standard-based instruction, use of inquiry-based activities, formative and summative assessments, inclusion of the nature of science, use of community-based resources for teaching science content, establishing linkages between science and language art instruction, adaptations for exceptional students
 - To improve the quality of science teaching through sustained professional development and the establishment of the program's participants as science instructional leaders at their schools

Project activities will include professional development/university courses in methodology, geology, biology, physics, chemistry, leadership, and teaching bilingual students; several meetings, mentoring; and classroom visits. Applications should be available by January 2009.

- The Implementation Team is gathering more information about STEM and continuing discussions concerning an MPA STEM initiative.
- Implementation Team members were asked to join MPS in a Benchmarking Project by APQC (American Productivity and Quality Center) relative to Professional Learning Communities that should be aligned with the work on Learning Teams. At least one person thus far has joined. The project includes a number of webinars/virtual visits and site visits to various areas of the country and a knowledge transfer session in February.
- MPA members were invited to attend the October 18th Milwaukee Area Academic Alliance in English workshop on creating creativity in the classroom.
- Kathy Williams, MPS Director of Teaching and Learning and long-time member of the MPA, has announced her retirement in December. Kathy is a member of the MPA Implementation Team and Comprehensive Literacy Work Group.

- NEA Foundation Grant Update:
 - The NEA Foundation National Board came to Milwaukee on October 22nd and 23rd for their annual meeting. They visited five Focus Schools (Pulaski, South Division, Keefe Avenue, Kagel and Gaenslen) as well as Milwaukee French Immersion School on the 23rd.
 - AT&T grant work is being coordinated with Project Lead The Way, Sponsor-A-Scholar and Admission Possible.
 - NEA Foundation Grant Principal Investigator, Dr. Christine Anderson, is working with the Center for Teaching Quality concerning the Milwaukee initiative on developing teacher leadership. The Center would like to use the Action Research Fellows as a focus group.
 - Dr. Anderson and two of the Action Research Fellows attended the Teachers Network Conference in Delaware.
 - Action Research Fellows gave two presentations at the Teachers' Convention in Madison at the end of October.
 - A professor from Alverno College will be going to South Division, Pulaski and Madison high schools once every week to continue the training received from Project CALL/SEWAC on taking information from data and institutionalizing instructional practices and helping to support the work of the Learning Teams.

The date of the next MPA Partners Meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2008.

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.