



MILWAUKEE PARTNERSHIP ACADEMY MONTHLY REPORT

November 2008

- The Implementation Team is gathering information and determining the meaning of STEM to the MPA. A wiki website has been established to aid in this work.
- Contacts continue with potential candidates for the MPA Interim Executive Director position.
- Day 1 of the MPA Retreat on Learning Teams took place on November 24th. There were 70 people in attendance. Participants reviewed information on learning teams and engaged in small and large group discussion concerning the following questions:
 - What are/should be the characteristics of a high-performing learning team (that is effective in improving teaching and student learning)?
 - What strategies can be used to ensure effective communication and collective buy-in between learning teams, administrators, teachers and staff at the school?
 - Given the core members of the learning team, what critical factors should schools consider when deciding on composition of learning teams?
 - If learning teams are working well, what is it likely to mean to teachers, administrators, students, parents, colleges and universities, community partners and others?
- Planning and preparations continue for Day 2 of the MPA Retreat on Learning Teams scheduled for December 15th. Information gathered from Day 1 discussion is being synthesized for further use.
- MPA work group work plan updates were shared with the Implementation Team.
- Work plan strategies of the Comprehensive Literacy Work Group center around position structure and a professional development model of comprehensive literacy for Literacy Coaches/Leaders. The work group also plans to continue writing and applying for literacy-related grants.
- Teacher & Principal Quality Work Group Update:
 - Teacher Induction Handbook—looking at follow-up and evaluation.
 - Discussions are taking place with the Teacher Center and Deborah Ford, MPS Executive Director of Human Resources, about assessments for mentors and initial educators.
 - Work around cooperating teachers is developing from the student teaching mapping project. Outcomes may include a training module. Some discussion was held at the Implementation Team level concerning issues around student teacher placements, field experiences and cooperating teachers. Some suggestions were made and some issues will be brought before the Metropolitan Milwaukee Area Deans of Higher Education.

- Coordination of PDP development is being looked at and a possible collaboration between the MTEA, MPS and institutes of higher education concerning a fair or showcase for initial educators to have their PDP reviewed and their team established.
- Efforts are being made to grow the National Board Certification and develop support systems.
- The MTEA has offered various forms of assistance for the work around PDPs and retention issues.
- Family Literacy & Tutoring Work Group Update:
 - Tutor training sessions continue. The last session was held at UWM. A community-wide tutor training session is being offered and targeted to community agencies and anyone who offers tutoring or works with kids or adults in order to teach them how to increase reading skills in others. The session is from 5:45-8:00 p.m. December 4th at the North Division Multiplex.
 - Another Clergy/Superintendent breakfast meeting was held on October 30th and included discussion about the MPS budget and funding, presentation of information from Title I and sharing of key dates on the pre-college planning calendar from COMPASS Guide. This group wishes to continue regular meetings.
 - Connection continues with the Parent Congress which is being organized with groups that represent parents. It will be working on developing ideas for strategies to empower parents and lead to improvement of student achievement.
- The Skunkworks Work Group is making an effort to include students in all of its meetings and is discussing the possibility of including students on Learning Teams. Ideas were presented to the Implementation Team and feedback was given.
- The Comprehensive Mathematics Work Group/Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership:
 - Held a breakfast meeting with principals on October 28th.
 - Is in the midst of implementing Year 6 of the Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership as well as the Governor's/Superintendent's math initiative.
 - Is learning from the math initiative monitoring conferences going on at the schools.
 - Is attempting to secure money to continue funding the Math Teacher Leaders.
 - Is planning for the December Math Teacher Leader meetings.
- Official announcement has been made of the award of National Science Foundation (NSF) funds in the amount of \$2 million over three years for the Phase II Proposal to study the work and effectiveness of the Math Teacher Leader initiative in the district with some support for ongoing professional development.
- The external review of the Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership has found interesting information on the role of Learning Teams in the effective implementation of mathematics in schools, thus supporting Learning Teams as an effective way of closing achievement gaps. This information will likely be shared at the MPA Retreat on Learning Teams.

- Information about the Math Teacher Leader model and responsibilities in place this year was shared with the Implementation Team. Critical pieces were identified and include:
 - A well defined position/good job description in place
 - Requirement of the teaching component
 - Ongoing, purposeful professional development which includes leadership and facilitation skills, the content for the strand (algebraic reasoning for this year) and formative assessment
 - Accountability to someone from outside of the school

Several suggestions were made for the Literacy Coach Model. Information is also being sought about the successful model used in Chattanooga.

- NEA Foundation Grant Update:
 - A cross-site convening was held in Seattle, Washington on November 12-14, 2008 for all sites in the NEA Foundation's Closing the Achievement Gaps Initiative. Dr. Christine Anderson, Milwaukee Grant Site Principal Investigator, attended along with several Steering Team members and other MPA members and individuals—Bill Andrekopoulos, Arleen Dansby-White and Catherine Thome (MPS); Peter Blewett (School Board); Tom Morgan and Dennis Oulahan (MTEA); Patricia Ellis (Stritch); Linda Post (UWM); and Bill Rickerts, External Evaluator (Alverno). Activities included school site visits; grant site sharing sessions on what's working; various presentation/discussion sessions on what is and is not working, cross-site evaluation, the NEA's Theory of Change, and recruiting and retaining the right people to transform learning in low-performing schools; and more. The Milwaukee site sharing session focused on Learning Teams.
 - Representatives from the Center for Teaching Quality came to speak with the Action Research Fellows regarding teacher leadership at their last meeting.
 - Planning is in progress for the Saturday, January 10th Professional Development Day for the NEA Focus Schools.
 - Fourth year funding has been approved and an additional sixth year extension on the grant for another \$600,000 has been given by the NEA Foundation.

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.