



2019 | 2020 Annual Report

MMSD Community,

The 2019–20 school year will go down in history. When Governor Tony Evers ordered Wisconsin schools to close on March 13th, we could not have foreseen the magnitude of the health crisis or the length of time we would be apart from our students.

I am so proud of our educators for rising to the occasion, adapting and transforming the way they teach and connect with students. I am in awe of our support staff – food and nutrition professionals, our custodial staff, tech services, social workers, bilingual resource specialists, secretaries, and so many others. I witnessed their creative, out-of-the-box, solutions to keep students at the center, lift up equity and keep our school district not only running in a time of crisis, but providing critical services to our community every day.

Speaking of community, your partnership in supporting our students has been invaluable. In particular, I want to extend immense gratitude to the Foundation for Madison's Public Schools. They have always been a tremendous asset to MMSD, but throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, their support has been even more meaningful and impactful.

But more than anyone, our students and families emerged through this difficult time with brilliance and resilience. It's never been clearer that even in dark times, our #MMSDFamily still shines bright.

Traditionally, MMSD releases an annual report on our Strategic Framework toward the end of summer. The report tells a story of our progress toward meeting key goals. We rely on several data points to piece together the full picture. But this picture is incomplete for the 2019–20 school year because most of the metrics we look at are not available. So in this report, in most cases, where we would have published results from second semester, we instead report out on first semester metrics.

Our annual report also acts as a springboard for the work moving forward. This year, we focus on what we learned from virtual learning in the spring. These are lessons that are relevant and actionable, as virtual learning continues indefinitely.

This report reflects the district under my leadership through the 2019–20 school year, my second tenure as interim superintendent. Despite the many challenges, I can confidently say that I would embrace, without looking back, the opportunity to lead MMSD through the school year.

As the district moves forward, it is now in the capable, caring, and courageous hands of Dr. Carlton D. Jenkins, MMSD's new superintendent, and he will close out this report.

This has been an unpredictable, unforgettable journey. It was my honor to serve Madison's children and youth.

Thank you,
Dr. Jane Belmore



March 13th

"It's never been clearer that even in dark times, our #MMSDFamily still shines bright."

– Dr. Jane Belmore

In This Together

Our world has changed in many ways since 2020 began. A global pandemic transformed the way we live and learn. Devastating incidents of racism and violence shook us as a nation and a community, and continue to do so. Those most impacted by these events include our most vulnerable students.

It's never been clearer that our public schools play a vital role in caring for the community in times of crisis. Throughout spring and summer, Madison's public schools, in partnership with key community organizations and businesses, kept families fed, provided internet access and digital devices to every one of our 27,000 students, and tended to the social-emotional health of students, staff, and family members to help us get through these challenging times.

We got through this together and will continue to do so. Because that's what families do.

#MMSDFamily  Watch how we came together



You Spoke

On April 6, 2020, MMSD's first day of virtual learning, we entered new territory together. And we learned together. In partnership with our students, families, and staff, we faced the challenges that virtual learning posed with patience, compassion, and out-of-the-box thinking.

We have always known that virtual learning in the spring would be imperfect. And we've known that learning from the experiences of students and teachers would be invaluable as we make adjustments for the future.

One key piece of evidence we have relied on to help us evaluate the successes and challenges of virtual learning is a set of surveys sent to all families, students in grades 3-12, teachers, instructional support staff, and principals.

6,200 families responded

59% White
19% Hispanic/Latinx
8% Black/African American
8% Multiracial
7% Asian

73% represented households that are not identified as lower-income

I was supported by my child's school in implementing Virtual Learning.

23% Very Supported

39% Supported

4% I'm not sure

29% Somewhat Supported

5% Not Supported

“I feel just teaching the parents as well as the students how to get around the systems would be huge. We need to know how to help our kids navigate the systems as well so we can be better suited to give them guidance.”



62%

of family members indicated that they felt supported with their Virtual Learning experience

5,800 students responded

53% White
17% Hispanic/Latinx
12% Black/African American
10% Asian
8% Multiracial

65% represented households that are not identified as lower-income

How often have you communicated with your teacher(s) in a typical week?

7% Not at all in a week

20% Once a week

58% A Few Times a week

12% Once a Day

3% Multiple times a day

“I prefer an actual person teaching me. I feel like I understand better that way because they break things down and talk about it...”



82%

of students agree that they know what they should be working on for their classes

1,300 teachers responded +

600 Instructional Staff
159 Speech/language clinicians
39 Library/media tech specialists
35 Social Workers
35 School-based administrative clerks
38 Principals

I am able to provide my students with rigorous challenging instruction.

11% Strongly Agree

34% Somewhat Agree

19% Neither Agree nor Disagree

24% Somewhat Disagree

12% Strongly Disagree

“when we begin in the fall, we need to have a plan that allows for pushing students at the level they are at, and making them accountable for the work that they are able to do.”



37%

of teachers and staff indicated that they were less sure how to support student learning in the remote environment

[Link](#) to full report

We Listened

Between May 26 and June 7, we heard from more than 13,000 individuals. This feedback helped us refine and improve upon virtual learning for the future. From the survey results, we took away some promising levers for “driving” improvements, including supporting frequent and meaningful connection, strengthening our guidance, and creating robust learning experiences.

Our Instructional Continuity Plan for the 2020-21 school year features more robust guidance for staff related to several of these key drivers. This includes more frequent synchronous learning experiences, revised policies regarding grading and attendance, a comprehensive new assessment strategy, and expanded guidance for staff regarding remote learning platforms and practices.

We also expanded our professional development to include 9 days of learning dedicated to developing and strengthening the critical knowledge and skills needed to provide all students with a positive, rigorous virtual learning experience grounded in anti-racist principles.

Supporting Frequent and Meaningful Connection

Analysis of family and student feedback indicates that more frequent connection is related to greater satisfaction and feelings of support. Qualitative feedback indicates that meaningful connection is most important - examples include instruction, feedback on assignments, and authentic social and emotional engagement.

Creating Robust Learning Experiences

While many families, students, and staff indicated that they felt supported during Virtual Learning, they also expressed some concern regarding the extent to which students' academic needs were being met in the spring. Key challenges raised by respondents centered on engaging students, maintaining high expectations for learning, and ensuring that instruction remained rigorous.

Strengthening MMSD Guidance

Analysis of feedback indicated that when respondents were more secure in the guidance surrounding Virtual Learning, they tended to feel more supported and satisfied. Teachers indicated that their experiences would have improved with more focused development around remote learning. Similarly, students and families appreciated clear guidance regarding how to access Virtual Learning, and expectations for student learning.



Virtual Office Hours for Teachers and Staff

Teachers and other instructional staff will schedule “office hours” each day, to allow for focused time to connect with families and build stronger relationships with students.

More Frequent Synchronous Learning Experiences

In the fall, each school will establish a schedule creating multiple opportunities each week for “face-to-face”, synchronous learning opportunities using platforms like Zoom. Teachers are also encouraged to supplement using pre-recorded videos to help foster relationships.

Comprehensive Assessment Plan

Central office staff will support school leaders and teachers as they use data to understand students' needs and accelerate their learning. Teachers will use formative assessments to gauge students' understanding of content at least twice per week as VL continues.

Revising Grading and Attendance Policies

While maintaining a focus on ensuring students' well-being, teachers will resume grading students using practices that produce consistent, accurate, and transparent reflections of our students' progress towards mastery of standards and skills. Similarly, attendance will be recording students' attendance and participation daily.

New Vision for Continuing PD

Beginning with “Welcome Back”, MMSD will initiate a new plan for staff development, with a focus on deepening the areas that are essential to ensuring equitable instruction and access for students, including prioritizing academic and social emotional learning standards and reimagining instruction to accelerate learning.

Developed New Instructional Continuity Plan

Responding to feedback from families, students, and staff, MMSD created a new Instructional Continuity Plan to guide Virtual Learning in fall '20. It includes more robust guidance regarding many aspects of Virtual Learning, including communication with families, instructional expectations, and guidance for staff across roles.

[Link](#) to full report

Goals

To accomplish our vision, we must also strive to meet a new set of ambitious goals for the future. These goals, working together, will help us stay focused on what really matters—keeping students on track for graduation and the fulfillment of their dreams, making sure our students experience thriving cultures and climates that lead to healthy identity development, and holding high expectations for all. We'll track progress on our goals and report publicly every year.

In addition to the metrics listed here, the district also includes PALS, MAP, and climate survey data to measure progress on the Strategic Framework goals. Due to lack of testing and survey data in 2020, this Annual Report provides a limited number of annual metrics, along with some Semester 1 metrics, to report on for 2019-20.

For additional metrics [click here](#)

Goal 1:

Every Child is on track to graduate college, career, and community ready.

A few consistent metrics help us track our progress over time. Our results have held strong.



ACT
Reading College Readiness 9-11
2019-20 (based on ACT statewide testing day only)

+4%
since 2015 -16

+1%
for African-American students since 2015 -16



ACT
Math College Readiness 9-11
2019-20 (based on ACT statewide testing day only)

+2%
since 2015 -16

-2%
for African-American students since 2015 -16



84%
4 Year High School
Completion Rates
2018-19 (lags 1 year)

+5%
since 2015 -16

+8%
for African-American students since 2015 -16



Immediate Enrollment in
Postsecondary
2018-19 (lags 1 year)

0%
since 2018 -19

-1%
for African-American students since 2017 -18

Semester 1, 2019-20:

54% **Cumulative GPA of 3.0+**
2019-20 Semester 1 only

Goal 2:

Every school is a place where children, staff and families thrive.

For additional metrics [click here](#)

13%

Teachers of Color

Teachers of Color includes individuals who self identified as American Indian, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Pacific Islander, or two or more races

87% Staff Retention

new annual metric 2019-20

2018-19
(lags 1 year)



Semester 1, 2019-20:

77%

Attendance Rate of
90% or Better



Goal 3:

African-American children and youth excel in school. We've set a goal that focuses our attention on dramatically improving the experience of our Black youth.

To get a clear picture of the Black student experience, Goal 3 includes all students who identify as Black – including Black, multi-racial/multi-ethnic students.

For additional metrics [click here](#)

Semester 1, 2019-20:



29% +1%

since 2018 -19
of Black students K-8 are identified as
Advanced Learners



38% +12%

since 2015 -16
of Black high school students participated in and earned a C or better in
Advanced Coursework



Grade 9 On-Track

to Complete High School
+1% since 2018 -19

“We will create silver linings out of the clouds of these uncertain, stressful times.”

– Carlton D. Jenkins, Ph.D.
Superintendent



Stronger together

Madison,

I am so excited to be leading you into the 2020-21 school year, and I want to thank Dr. Jane Belmore for her extraordinary leadership as interim superintendent.

As we embark on our first fall quarter of virtual learning, I see a rare opportunity to break the mold and turn our usual ways of working upside down, while we develop out-of-the-box strategies to ensure all students achieve at high levels.

We are learning valuable lessons which we will take back to school when we return to in-person instruction, once it is safe to do so. Yet we know that returning to “normal” will not be an option, and we must take advantage of this historic opportunity to evolve and better serve all students. We will create silver linings out of the clouds of these uncertain, stressful times.

The familiar adage has never felt more relevant. It takes a village. It takes a village to raise a child, to raise each other up, to amplify the voices of our most vulnerable. It takes a village to care for neighbors, extend a helpful hand, lend a listening ear, offer an open heart. It takes a village to do what Madison did as a community through spring and summer, and to continue this difficult yet vital work for as long as needed. You are that village. Madison’s children and youth need you now more than ever, and it has never been clearer to us how important our village is.

Please continue to walk with us as we strive to lift Madison up as a thriving, equitable community for generations to come. A powerful choice you can make is to vote on November 3, or by absentee ballot, on two important questions on the ballot about our school district. I encourage you to get the information you need to make your decision at mmsd.org/future-ready.

I am so happy and proud to be here, back home in Madison, and can’t wait to see where we go together. We are #MMSDStrong.

Sincerely,

Carlton D. Jenkins, Ph.D.
Superintendent