

MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Building Relationships with Students

October, 2026

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Superintendent

MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Council of Great City Schools Fall Conference

Presenter

Jennifer Hernandez, PhD
Academic Superintendent

Introduction





This work is a collaboration of experts in urban education, behavior, academics, mental health, community organizers, and district leaders.

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MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

At a Glance

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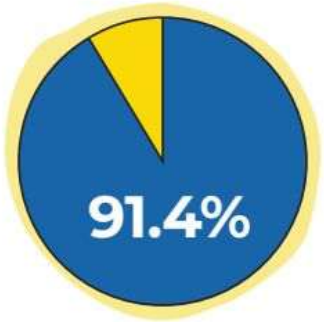
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EDUCATING

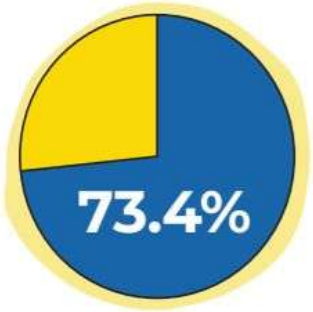
64,521

K3–GRADE 12 STUDENTS

2025–26 enrollment



STUDENTS OF COLOR



STUDENTS WHO ARE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED*



STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

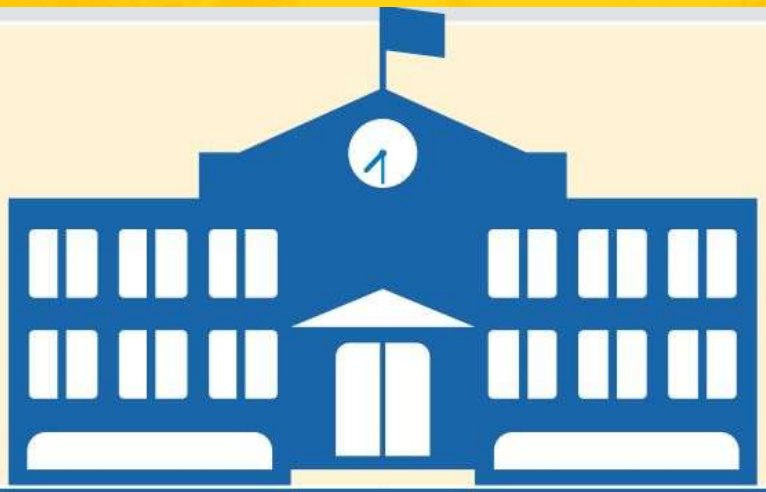


ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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BUDGET	GRADUATION RATE	APPROX. EMPLOYEES	LICENSURE
$1.6 **BILLION** *State and local base funds per student: $15,834*	**72%** *Up 8 percentage points from 2021* 	**10,100** **FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT POSITIONS** *Including 4,500 teachers and 1,800 educational assistants*	**100%** *Teachers licensed by Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) or enrolled in licensure programs*

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OFFERING 145 SCHOOL OPTIONS

K3–Grade 12

SPECIALTY SCHOOLS



8

ARTS SCHOOLS

Plus art and music in all schools



8

FREE PUBLIC MONTESSORI SCHOOLS

Among the largest clusters nationwide

12

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB) SCHOOLS

All four programmes: Primary Years, Middle Years, Diploma, Career-related



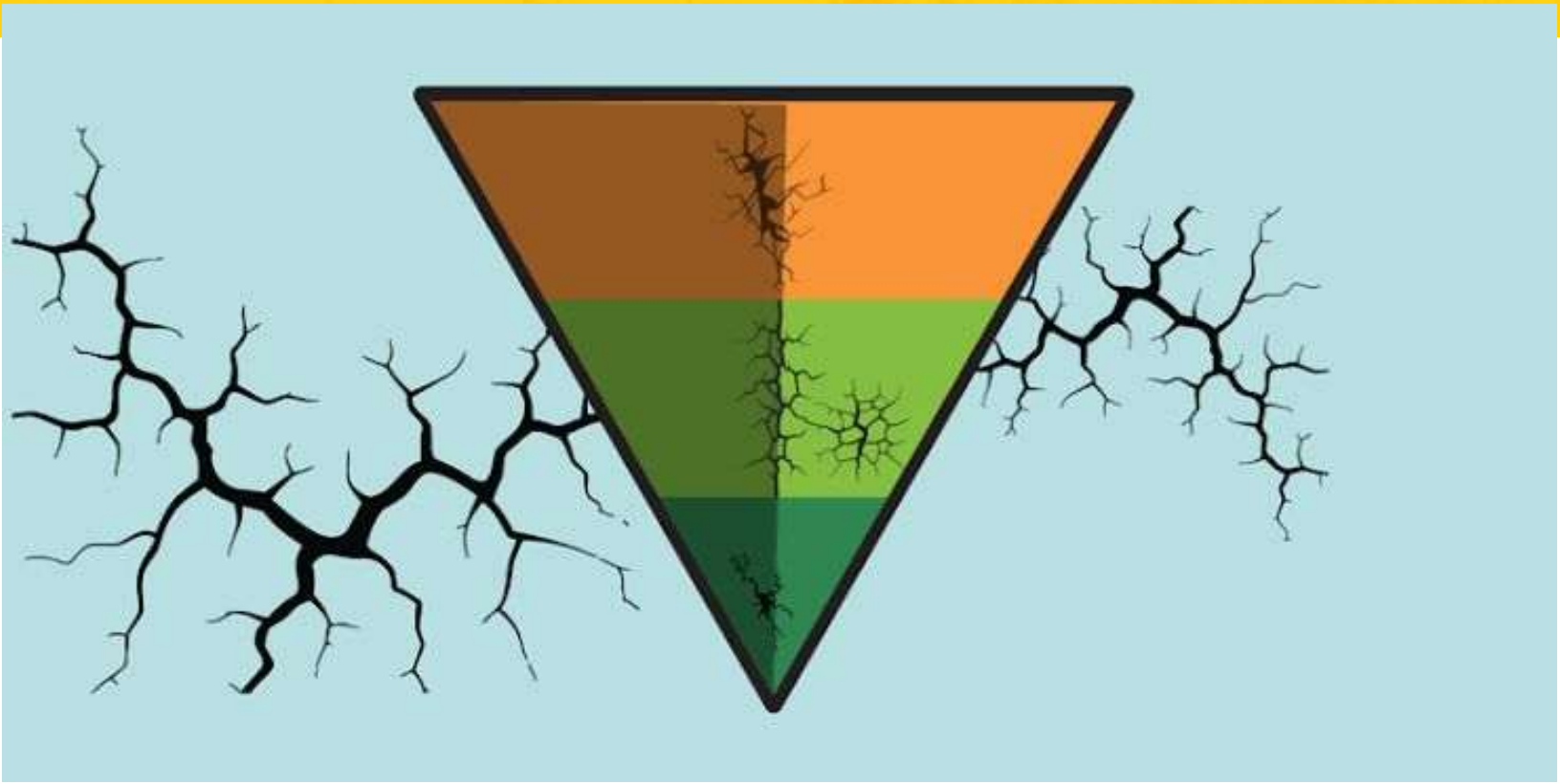
24

BILINGUAL & IMMERSION SCHOOLS

Plus 25 schools offering English as a second language (ESL)



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MLSS

Strong Tier 1

Appropriate Tier 2 interventions

Comprehensive Tier 3 interventions

Cultural History

Who are we, collectively?

Positionality

Who am I?

Social Identity & Marginality

Racial, Gender, Ability Identity Development

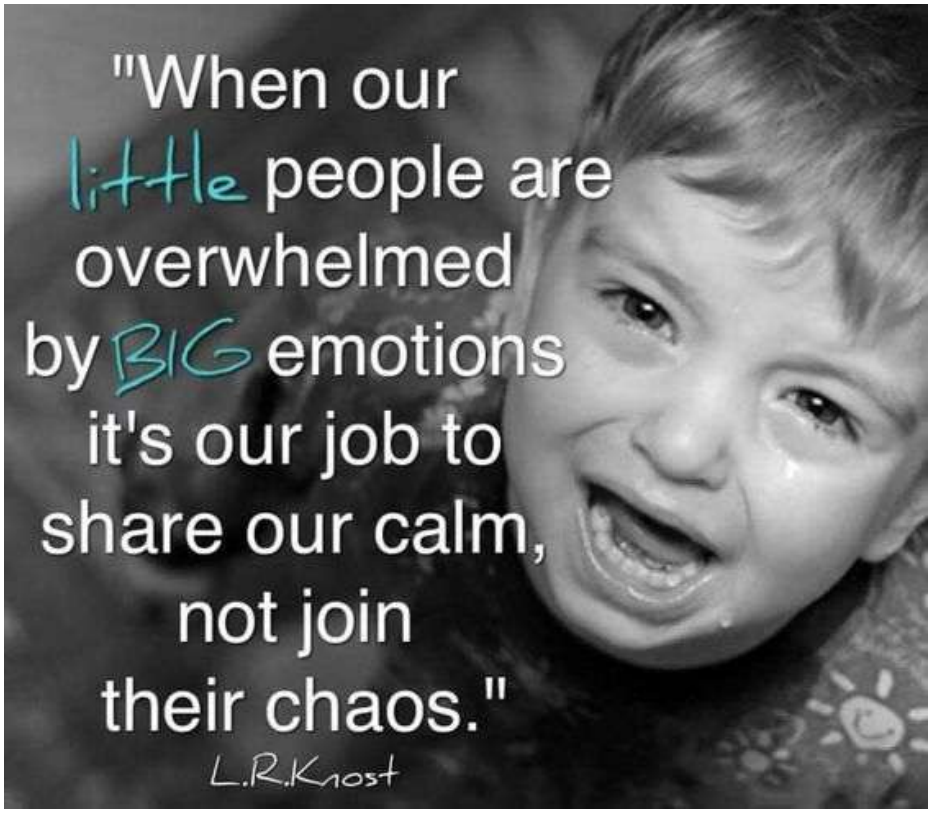
Systems Thinking

Structural and Historical Inequity & Oppression

Democracy

Active & Engaged Citizens

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Relationships

Authentic , Reciprocal, Quality

Holistic Community Approach

Authentic Family Engagement

Trauma Informed

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Data tells the story

Data Driven

PLCs
IDEA



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Systems Remedy

- Admission
- Data deep dive
- Initial contact
- Parent Contact
- Small group intervention
- School based support
- Intervention placement
- Follow-through
- Sustainability

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Professional Development

For ALL staff and school employees

For all Families

- **Restorative**
  Responding to the harm caused and change the way we respond to behaviors
- **Vulnerability**
  Admitting what you do not understand
- **Brutal Facts**
  Speak truth to the context
- **Systems Interaction**
  Autopsy on schools, housing,healthcare, criminal justice, etc…
- **Positionality**
  Where do I sit in this context?

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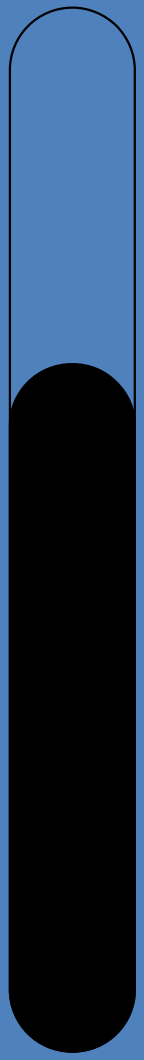
Academics

30%

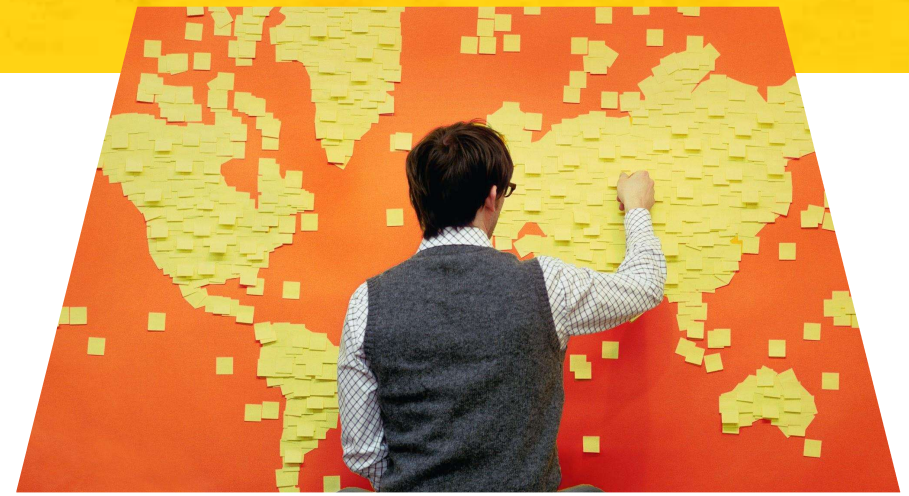


75%

Culture







- Deep Data Drive
- Address the brutal truth
- Autopsy of the systems
- Admission & Correction
- Personal connections

- Coherence across the district is not present
- Strong Tier 1 is mandatory- there is not intentions out of a strong Tier 1
- Cross departmental collaboration is essential for central office to respond to school needs
- Self regulation is key

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Next Steps

01 Planning

The group of suspended students can be the core of our youth advocacy groups

02 Brainstorming

MLSS Academics needs to catch up to behavior and district leaders are collaborating to assist

03 Conceptualizing

Creating a strong Tier I for both academics and behavior- what does that look like for MPS?

04 Progress Check

Systems for monitoring, RAD, SW/Psychs, SPED, and Building leaders

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Thank You
MPS
MILWAUKEE
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Vinaka
köszönöm
Kiitos
Maake
Asante
Shukria
Dhanyavadagalu
감사합니다
Kam Sah Hammida
Manana
Dankon
Matondo
Dank Je
Dankscheen
спасибо
Mauruuru
Biyan
Blagodaram
Dziekuje
Ngiyabonga
Chokrane
Tack
Juspaxar
Arigato
Grazie
Gracias
Mochchakkeram
நன்றி
धन्यवाद
Ua Tsaug Rau Koj
Bedankt
Ďakujem
Grazas
cảm ơn bạn
Tingki
Gratias Tibi
Obrigado
Děkuji
Nirringrazzjak
Suksama
Hvala
ありがとう
Welalin
Djiere Dieuf
Misaotra
Rahmat
Matur Nuwun
谢
谢
хвала
Danke
Merci
Di Ou Mèsi
Kia Ora
Kop Khun Khap
Go Raibh Maith Agat
Eskerrik Asko
Salamat
ขอขอบคุณคุณ
Najis Tuke



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Thank you!



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Questions?



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