

K-12 Education Agenda

**IMPROVING STUDENT OUTCOMES BY
INVESTING IN QUALITY SCHOOLS**



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1

Equality for all K–12 publicly funded students

Supporting all publicly funded K-12 students in the city equally is the best way to ensure a quality education for all. Today students attending independent public charter schools or utilizing public funding to attend a private school in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) receives \$5,000 – \$6,000 less than MPS students. [See page 7.](#)

2

Raise the reimbursement for Special Education costs

The State covers 30% of the cost serving students with disabilities. This is particularly challenging for independent charter and private schools with lower per pupil funding. Increasing the coverage to at least 50% is a necessary first step. [See page 8.](#)

3

Implement best practice governance for charter schools

Support the replication of existing schools and the addition of new high-quality schools in the City through improved charter authorizing policies and the creation of a new Local Education Agency (LEA). [See page 9.](#)

4

Improve state report card data integrity

Ensure data can be compared year over year to access trends in school performance. Review assessment to better communicate the impact of actual student proficiency and student improvement. [See page 10](#)

5

Revitalize MPS

Revitalize the important role MPS has in educating students in a city with a robust K-12 system driven by parent choice. Better use of facilities, active support for charter options, and improved access to school board elections are part of a strategy to reinvest in MPS. [See page 11.](#)

Executive summary

An educated and skilled citizenry is key to a prosperous community, driving economic growth and narrowing racial disparities.

Despite Milwaukee’s progress, low-income students of color face a stubborn gap in educational attainment.

Less than 15% of the city’s K-12 public school students will earn a two- or four-year college degree after graduation. The top ten high demand jobs in metro Milwaukee have 40,000 openings. The lack of qualifying education hampers individual prosperity, which in turn helps to perpetuate racial disparities through a generation-spanning cycle of poverty.

More than 25 years ago, stagnating K-12 educational outcomes for low-income students in the city led MMAC to the position that families should have the resources to choose where their children were educated.

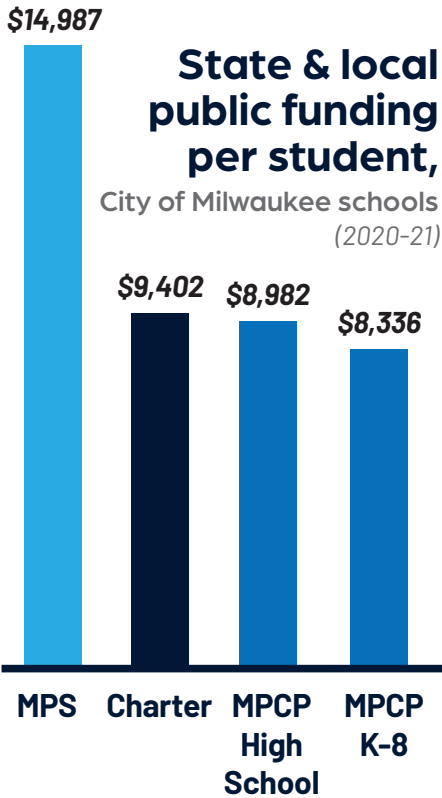
MMAC’s advocacy helped to establish new law that provides public funding for students enrolling in independent public charter schools, or in private schools enrolled in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP). This change gave rise to more quality schools serving low-income students.

Today, Milwaukee parents enroll almost half of all students (45,000) in independent charter or private schools with public funding support. More than 80% of these students are attending charter or private schools rated as “meeting or exceeding expectations” on the State’s report card. By contrast only 60% of MPS students are in similarly rated schools (pre-COVID data).

Parent choice has led to improving student outcomes, but it has also led to an enrollment decline in MPS from 90,000 students in 2007 to 58,000 in 2022.

While this document profiles disturbing trends in the city’s K-12 educational outcomes, it also provides recommendations for strengthening quality schools and improving student outcomes.

The top recommendation is to increase funding for parent choice. Parents choosing to send their children to independent public charter schools, or private schools in the MPCP program are receiving funding that is \$5,000-\$6,000 less per pupil than MPS. This funding gap is not only a significant inequity, but it threatens the ability of schools to provide a quality education. We are asking schools to climb a Mt. Everest sized challenge, to serve disadvantaged students, and to do so without the oxygen of resources. Some will make it, most will not.



Background

Many families face complex social issues that defy easy solutions.

Trauma outside the classroom impacts the classroom.

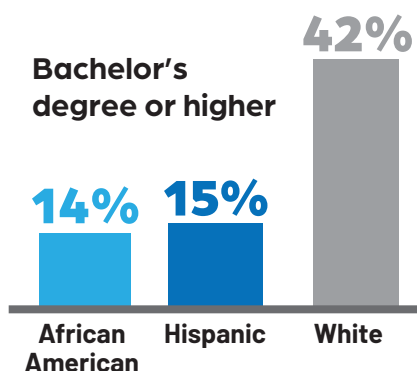
Behind only Detroit, Milwaukee has the second-highest poverty rate of the top 50 U.S. cities. Of all public-school students in the city, 67% will graduate from high school, 36% will gain college acceptance and only 14% will graduate with in six years with a two- or four-year degree. Amid a city riddled with poverty, Milwaukee has an epic crisis of educational attainment.

Milwaukee students face inequity, poverty and trauma challenges unlike any other student body in Wisconsin. In close correlation, educating these students is unlike any other challenge in K-12 education in Wisconsin. Across seven measures of economic prosperity, Milwaukee sits at the bottom of 20 peer regions. We rank last in prosperity for African Americans and Hispanic/Latino Americans and have the widest prosperity gap by race.

In the City of Milwaukee:

24.1%
of African American households are headed by a single female

In comparison to 20 peer metros Milwaukee has the highest percentage of households headed by a single female in the African American community at 24.1%, and the third-highest percentage of households headed by a single female (13%) in the Hispanic/Latino community. Single mothers strive to balance work and parenting but face significant financial headwinds: Single female-headed households struggle with poverty, with a median income half that of married couples.



Milwaukee ranks last in its peer group when it comes to African Americans (14%) and Hispanic/Latino Americans (15%) who have achieved a bachelor's degree or higher. With college attainment levels for the region's White population at 42%, this gap is the largest in the 20-metro peer group. This disparity places many of the city's K-12 students in the position of "they can't be what they can't see."

25%
poverty rate

\$23,000
per capita income

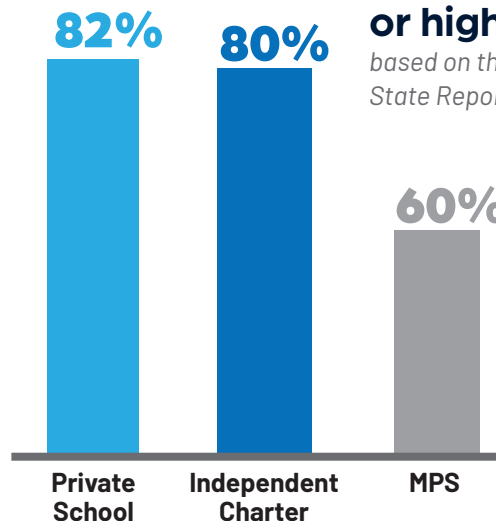
The environment is equally disparate when it comes to owner-occupied housing. Add in displacement from a stable home and violent crime, and many students are traumatized by the environment in which they live. While not all families and students in the city face such dire circumstances, it is all too common: Milwaukee's poverty rate is 25% and its per capita income is just over \$23,000, compared to \$57,000 for the metro area.

Cogent proposals to improve Milwaukee’s K-12 system must consider the environment in which students are being educated. While schools in the city can’t do it all, they play a crucial role in preparing students for their future.

The K-12 system in the City of Milwaukee is unique: parents can access state funding to send their children to MPS, private and independent charter schools. Regardless of income, parents (of 114,048 students) have access to a school that best serves their children’s needs. Options outside of MPS, limited by space, are determined by lottery.

Percentage of City of Milwaukee students attending schools rated as “meeting expectations or higher”

based on the WI Dept. of Public Instruction’s State Report Card (2020-21)



Funding parity is critical

Parents are making choices driven by school quality. Some 45,000 are enrolled outside of MPS. The biggest threat to growing and sustaining quality schools is the chronic disparity in funding for the private and independent charter options.

Parents who choose to enroll their student in a private school or an independent charter school, are supported with funding that is \$5,000 to \$6,000 less than the same choice when enrolling in MPS. Left as-is, parent choice will be pyrrhic for thousands of students and their families.

This funding gap is the most significant barrier to quality schools.

Running a school through the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most difficult undertakings any organization could face. The results are telling: students have fallen behind, parents are distrustful and retaining talented teachers and staff is more difficult as it has been in decades.

The per-student funding gap was exacerbated during the pandemic on both the federal and state levels. The biggest threat to students is not the curriculum, it’s the gross underfunding of students who attend charter and choice schools.

MPS is vital

Historically, MPS anchored public education in the city. Now just over half of publicly funded students are served by MPS. Recent proposals to break the district into smaller pieces show no evidence of advancing student performance. A revitalized strategy to reduce overhead and a right-size their commitment to a smaller student body is what MPS needs to better serve students.

In this polarized environment, MMAC is focused on an agenda of K-12 education to serve all students.

THE POWER OF ALLOWING PARENTS TO DECIDE WHAT'S BEST FOR THEIR CHILDREN

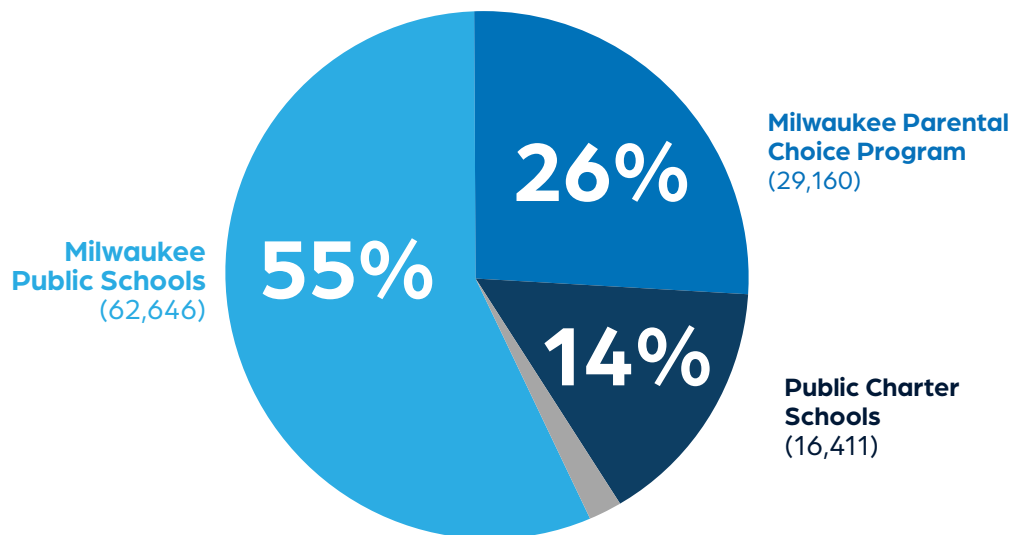
27 years ago, MMAC helped launch an effort to implement publicly funded parent choice. Since then, MMAC has led support from the business community for parental choice as an option – not as a replacement – for MPS.

There's a success story hidden among all the dire statistics and outcomes: Low-income parents have more flexibility in the use of public resources for K-12 education than almost any other parent in a U.S. city.

The advent of parental choice, and the authorization of independent public charter schools, gave parents the financial resources to choose where their children are educated. MMAC helped open this policy door – but parents made the actual choices to walk their children through these classroom doors.

Whether MPS, independent charter or private schools better outcomes are the goals of parent choice.

In 2022, there were 114,048 publicly funded K–12 students in the City of Milwaukee



**An additional 5% (5,831) students open enroll in public schools outside of the city*

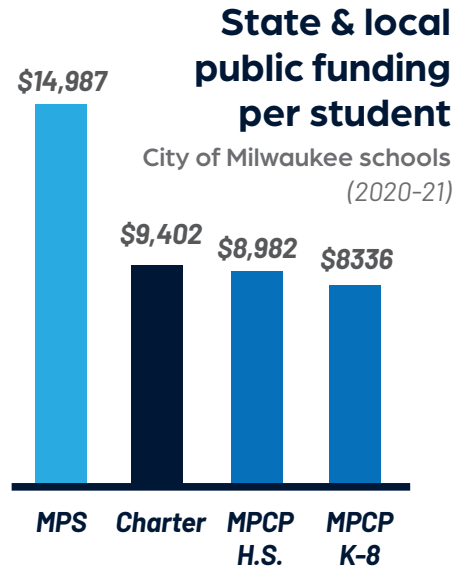
1. Equality for all K–12 publicly funded students

The public funding provided for students attending MPS, charter and choice schools varies significantly. Inequitable per-student funding poses the biggest challenge to growing quality schools.

The bottom line is that choice and charter students are being funded between \$5,000 to \$6,000 less than their MPS counterparts. This gap places a significant burden on schools to fundraise from private, philanthropic and corporate foundations. Quality school expansion is significantly constrained by the lack of sustainable funding.

For a public charter school like Milwaukee Academy of Sciences (MAS) with 1,349 students this amounts to a gap of \$6M per year. In addition, public charters do not receive transportation funding, which requires MAS to cover \$1.5M in student transportation costs. Schools like St. Marcus raise an additional 15% on top of their per-pupil funding, which amounts to an annual fundraising total of \$1,275,000 for 950 students.

Under current law, any general increase in state per-pupil aid flows equally to MPS, charter and choice schools. But currently, funding for charter and private schools is substantially below the cost per student to operate a K-8 or high school.



RECOMMENDATION
INCREASE PER-PUPIL FUNDING

Advocate for increased per-pupil funding for all students that is equal to at least the increase in the rate of inflation. This stabilizes funding for K-12, helping teacher retention and recruitment. For example: An inflationary increase in the last state budget would have provided \$342 per pupil.

Investment: \$288M

RECOMMENDATION
CLOSE THE FUNDING GAP FOR CHARTER AND CHOICE SCHOOLS IN THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE

The current level of funding following students to private schools (in MPCP) and independent public charter schools in the city of Milwaukee is significantly below MPS.

MMAC supports equal funding for students attending an independent charter school or a private school under the choice program. As an example equal funding would result in approximately \$278M in additional per pupil funding support.

Investment: \$278M

2. Raise the reimbursement for special education costs

Of all states with a reimbursement system for special education costs, Wisconsin’s rate of 28.2% is the country’s lowest.

The state commits a relatively large portion of its discretionary budget toward K-12 education. This funding comes in two pots: general school aids and categorial aids, funded by general purpose tax revenue. The general school aid formula distributes funding throughout the state to the 421 school districts. The state school aid formula has an equalization goal to provide more aid to those districts with lower property values. The second pot of funding, categorial aid, is aimed at delivering state funding for specific educational purposes. There are currently 31 categories of aid. These categories have built up over time to address specific needs or respond to new priorities.

Special education funding is categorial aid to support the additional cost to serving students with special needs. Because independent charter and choice schools have significantly lower per-pupil funding, the cost burden for providing special education services is even greater.

One thing all three sectors – MPS, charter and choice – have in common is the makeup of the students. All three sectors serve economically disadvantaged students (80-82%) and students who are English learners (9-12%). There is, however, a gap serving students with disabilities (10-21%), with MPS carrying the higher number in this range. Raising reimbursements for the costs of special education would have the added benefit of giving more parents options, while lessening the concentration of special education students in MPS.

| | MPS | MPCP | Charter |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Econ. Disadvantaged | 86% | 85% | 85% |
| Students w/ Disabilities | 21% | N/A | 11% |
| English Learners | 12% | 10% | 12% |

RECOMMENDATION

INCREASE REIMBURSEMENT FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION COSTS

MMAC supports raising reimbursement for special education costs to 50%. As noted by the 2019 Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding and highlighted by research from the Wisconsin Policy Forum, Wisconsin continues to trail the nation in funding support for students with disabilities.

Investment: \$650-700M

3. Implement best practice governance for charter schools

Establish a new authority to disburse federal and state funds to independent charter and private schools in the MPCP to best serve all students.

Resources, public and private, are not being optimized in the interests of the students. With half the students in MPS and half outside of it – and students matriculating in between each of these options – Milwaukee (and the state of Wisconsin) would benefit from a structure that best serves all students.

This reality is complicated by the tug of war over resources that still flow based on the K-12 system of 25 years ago. This system has stymied a consistent and overarching approach to the reality of how education is delivered in 2022. A vibrant example of this was seen during the pandemic in serving the needs of all students. While well-intentioned, the City Health Department’s approach to health care guidelines for schools assumed all schools operated like those in MPS. In practice, those not in MPS had to organize on their own to make their case to reopen for in-person learning.

In another example, MPS authorizes charter schools, grants access to facilities, and provides some basic school services. However, in practice it draws additional resources from the schools it charters to support its overall operations. The 2018 Wisconsin Policy Forum report, “A

Teachable Moment” concluded that, “when (MPS) administrative fees and supplemental payments are considered, MPS saw an average positive gain of \$2,243 per student, which it used to support district-wide costs.” This less than transparent diversion of resources leaves charter school students shortchanged and raises concerns over a level playing field for charter schools in MPS.

Separate Local Education Agency needed

In Milwaukee, MPS operates as the local education agency (LEA) for the city. This includes all independent charter and private schools in MPCP. Creating a separate LEA for charter and choice schools would ensure that these schools receive 100% of federal and state “pass-through” funds while also freeing schools of third-party vendor markups and the rent-seeking that occurs.

New providers and replication of the highest-performing schools in the city have lagged for many reasons, including per-pupil funding and access to school facilities. These reforms could change the landscape and have immediate impact on schools.

RECOMMENDATION

ESTABLISH A NEW LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY (LEA) AND IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICE GOVERNANCE MODELS

1. Create a new LEA for independent public charter and private schools in the MPCP.
2. Create an independent charter school authorizing board.
3. Prohibit authorizers from mandating procurement services and mandating the use of vendors or providers for those services.
4. Enhance the autonomy for instrumentality charter schools by giving governing boards hiring/ firing and bargaining authority.
5. Require all authorizers to adopt and publish a model charter contract and charter school performance framework and identify what provisions are negotiable by schools.

4. Improve State Report Card data integrity

If funding is the input and student performance is the output, then accountability is the balancing mechanism.

The State of Wisconsin spends \$6.8B on education each year, and nearly \$1.5B of that is spent here in the City of Milwaukee educating approximately 114,000 children. The ultimate “check and balance” is transparency.

A transparent and uniform measure of school performance and student progress for all publicly funded students is key to holding all parties, parents, students, policy makers, educators, and taxpayers accountable.

A lack of comparable and consistent data when it comes to student performance has contributed to frustration and criticism over the years. Changing the state test multiple times exasperated the “apples to oranges” debate when looking at school performance data.

The COVID-19 pandemic further disrupted consecutive years of reliable test data. With closings, remote learning and missing students, changes were made to the State Report Card.

Having a quality test and report card gives students, parents and the community better capability to make informed decisions. As consumers and partners – parents and administrators, including elected officials who fund and govern schools – we have not done enough to ensure transparent information on the performance of students and schools. Information is the foundation for accountability.

RECOMMENDATION

BETTER BALANCE OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & GROWTH

Currently, for any school or district serving (at minimum) 65% economically disadvantaged students, Achievement accounts for only 8% of a school or district’s ‘priority area weights’ used in the School and District Report Cards formula while Growth accounts for 72% of that priority weighted score. The State Report Card must strike a better balance of the Achievement (proficiency) and Growth components for Milwaukee Schools.

5. Revitalize MPS

Parent choice has resulted in a historically smaller MPS. Now MPS must reassess its future in delivering quality education.

The Milwaukee Public Schools are foundational to the delivery of K-12 education in the city. Some 58,000 students are educated in 156 school buildings across the district.

What has changed for the foreseeable future is the role MPS plays. It is no longer the only source of public education, but part of a system of publicly funded parent choice. Parents can utilize public funding to attend MPS, independent charter and private schools participating in the MPCP program. Today, 45% of the 114,048 students accessing public funding attend a school other than MPS. Many students move between these options over the course of their K-12 career, but MPS enrollment has been on a steady decline for 20 years.

MPS needs a strategic plan that revitalizes the academic outcomes of the students it's educating. This plan will require both the recognition of the reality of parent choice, and the implementation of changes that best utilizes resources for improving student outcomes.

**What's needed
is a recognition
that parents
have options.**

Summary of recommendations

- Prioritize student outcomes from investment
- Make charter schools part of the MPS plan
- Right size the district's capital costs
- Provide access to underutilized MPS buildings
- Change the timing of school board elections

RECOMMENDATION

PRIORITIZE STUDENT OUTCOMES FROM INVESTMENT

MPS has an opportunity to both improve student outcomes and provide transparent accountability to parents and taxpayers.

MPS's strategic plan must identify how its investments in human and physical capital will improve student outcomes. Implementation should maximize resources in the classroom with a realistic assessment of its personnel and capital requirements. If funding sources are utilized as a fiscal life preserver to keep MPS afloat in this storm of declining enrollment, student outcomes will continue to sink.

Examples include an unprecedented one-time investment of \$700M in federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding, which exceeded 70% of the district's annual budget. Combined with a permanent tax increase that provides an ongoing infusion of \$87M in per-pupil funding. This additional property tax funding is completely decoupled from enrollment declines. MPS must communicate a clear strategy to improve student outcomes

RECOMMENDATION

MAKE CHARTER SCHOOLS PART OF THE MPS PLAN

Independent charter schools, authorized by MPS, represent its fastest-growing enrollment and account for 20% of MPS students.

The schools also account for many of the district's highest-performing schools. Yet it is unclear if they are part of MPS's strategy to serve students. The MPS board and administration vacillate between benign neglect and outright hostility when it comes to schools authorized as charters of the district. To further emphasize this point, MPS property tax revenue is not used to support independent district charter schools, inclusive of the \$87M in new property tax revenue. The referendum property tax increase could have provided an additional \$1,450 per student to the

underfunded independent charter schools – MPS-authorized schools attended by students whose parents pay MPS property taxes.

MPS should embrace a pro-charter strategy. It has proven to enhance quality school offerings. It would retain and attract students, bolstering district finances dependent on enrollment. Additionally, underutilized MPS buildings could house growing charter school enrollment, potentially alleviating the need for substantial capital campaigns, funded by individual and corporate philanthropy.

RIGHT SIZE THE DISTRICT'S FINANCIAL FOOTPRINT, ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS & CAPITAL COSTS

Every dollar spent by MPS on a vacant or underutilized school building is a dollar removed from classroom teaching or student support.

Excess overhead creates fiscal challenges

A significant portion of MPS revenue is driven by its enrollment, so dropping enrollment without an offset in overhead costs puts the district in a fiscally challenged position. MPS is projecting a cumulative deficit of \$331M over the next five years. This is despite the unprecedented permanent referendum that provides an additional \$87M annually that does not go to charter schools – revenue that is immune from enrollment declines.

MPS is projecting a cumulative deficit of \$331M over the next five years.

Now even MPS schools, like Ronald Reagan College Prep High School, are turning to outside philanthropy.

This frustration is ripe in the business community. The expansion of the MPCP and independent charter schools has increased philanthropic requests for not only capital, but also for operating support to make up for lower per-pupil funding. That essentially leaves businesses to pay twice: First through their property taxes – commercial property accounts for 40% of MPS property tax revenue. Second through corporate donations.

Declining enrollment means excess capacity

Back in 2018, MPS Superintendent Keith Posley announced a new city-wide enrollment initiative aimed at adding 2,000 new students. MPS enrollment has declined by 8,000 students since then in 2022.

Also in 2018, MGT Consulting Group produced a final report for a long-range facility master plan for the Milwaukee Public Schools. The report noted that “MPS can reasonably expect enrollment to continue to decline, and the number of excess seats to increase.”

The report noted that district enrollment in 2018 was 66,622 students, while it had a 78,074-seat capacity. MPS was carrying 14% in excess seats. The report went on to project that excess capacity would grow to 18,105 seats (23%) by 2027-2028, based on a then-projected enrollment of 59,969. MPS is likely to drop to this enrollment seven years ahead of projection, with enrollment less than 60,000 for the 2022-23 school year.

All schools are being challenged by a demographic decline in students, as the school-age 3-17 population is down by 5% over a decade. The MPS enrollment decline escapes a demographic explanation.

Right size district capital costs

An oversized footprint draws capital investment away from upgrading and investing in state-of-the-art schools. Just like any business, MPS faces the challenge of a “right sized” capital budget, one that smartly meets current needs while investing for the future. MPS needs a comprehensive forward-looking facilities plan – now.

According to recent MPS budget data, MPS has a facilities mismatch. MPS operates 156 school sites, posting an average enrollment of 450 students per site. The average large urban district has 586 students per school site. This calculation would project MPS to have 20-25% excess capacity. The district is spending more on buildings and maintenance expenses than is necessary.

An updated MPS facilities study is needed to identify excess capacity as part of a plan to right-size the district school building portfolio with the goal of better serving students, reducing excess carrying costs and potentially freeing up facilities for use by other quality school providers.

MPS’s mismanagement of its school facilities results in three major problems:

1. Excess capacity costs

MPS could be carrying 17,000 empty seats. Multiplying MGT’s calculation of the average per-student operating cost by the number of empty seats (\$11,002 x 17,000) shows us that MPS could be spending \$187M for students that don’t exist.

2. Poor utilization of existing facilities

This endemic overcapacity obscures the real story: Poor utilization of existing school facilities. According to the MGT study, “there are schools over-enrolled as well as schools significantly under-enrolled/utilized.” Take MPS’s decade-long ignorance of its highest performing high-school, Ronald Reagan High. The Reagan high students are in a middle school facility that has a stated capacity of 900 students, yet it currently holds 1,400 students. Reagan High could easily fill 2,000 spots. Those who can’t get in often leave MPS for other options.

3. Community wide inefficiency

The mismanagement of MPS school facilities chokes off the growth of high-quality school options both in and outside the district. A good example of the impact of under-enrollment is three MPS middle schools in the Highland Park neighborhood that leave students and families poorly served. The highest of the average student performance at Carver, Holmes and King has 1.8% of the students proficient in English Language Arts and 3.8% proficient in math. These schools join 20 others on the north and northwest sides that were rated as “failing to meet expectations.” Five of these schools had no students reading at grade level.

2019 Example:

Empty seats at MPS middle schools

| | <i>Enrollment</i> | <i>Total Student Capacity</i> | <i>% of capacity filled</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Carver | 409 | 614 | 66% |
| Holmes | 289 | 705 | 41% |
| Rufus King | 414 | 779 | 53% |

Total of 2,098 unused seats

When Rufus King Middle school dipped to 53% enrollment, instead of consolidating its students and selling the building to St. Marcus for \$10M, MPS invested \$10M into Rufus King – only to see enrollment skid further from 440 to 414, making the building even more underutilized. Meanwhile, St. Marcus raised funds to expand its campus to support enrollment that has now grown to 950 students.

RECOMMENDATION

PROVIDE ACCESS TO UNDERUTILIZED MPS BUILDINGS

An efficient answer to meeting some of the current capital needs involves school buildings already funded with taxpayer dollars, sitting idle or underutilized.

Corporate taxpayers account for 40% of the MPS tax base, and those companies and their foundations are being pitched to fund new or renovated school buildings. And Milwaukee is not unique.

A February 2022 *Wall Street Journal* story noted that Oakland education officials voted to close seven schools amid enrollment declines. The Oakland Unified School district has lost more than 20,000 students since 2000, and now enrolls 33,000 students.

MPS enrollment is on a decades-long decline, but its impact on MPS facility needs has evaded a strategic assessment. MPS has gone to great lengths, with tacit support from the city, which serves as MPS's landlord, to avoid right-sizing its facility footprint and potentially putting its school buildings on the market.

The capital costs and debt from renovations or new school buildings driven by parent demand places another barrier on the growth of quality schools.

Recent examples include:

- \$42M expansion of St. Augustine Prep
- \$30M build of the new Hmong American Peace Academy
- \$20M for a new Howard Fuller Collegiate Academy campus
- \$17M expansion of St. Marcus
- \$3M expansion of Central City Cyber School

With additional school expansions underway collective capital needs run north of \$150M. Capital funding also feeds into requests for annual operating support for choice and charter schools.

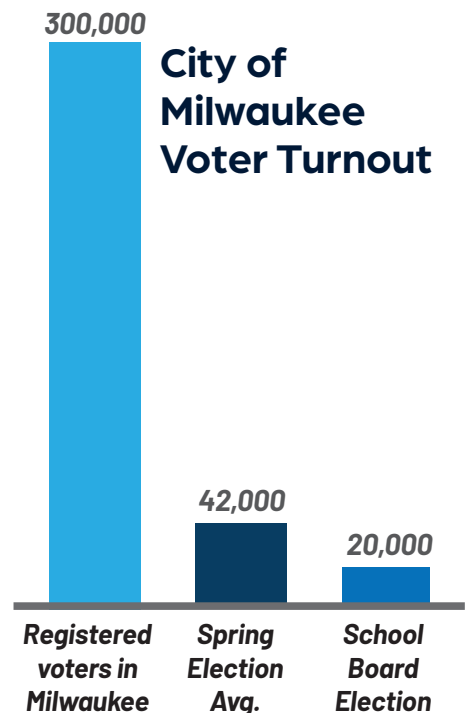
Current state statutes identify the conditions under which underutilized school buildings operate. MMAC supports strengthen these provisions and advocating that the city better enforce existing law.

RECOMMENDATION

CHANGE THE TIMING OF SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

There are around 300,000 registered voters in the City of Milwaukee. Spring election turnout averages 6% (20,000 voters).

Greater citizen engagement in school board elections would be a positive for Milwaukee, while potentially improving oversight of a \$1.2B taxpayer funded K-12 provider. MMAC advocates for moving the April elections to the fall (November) to increase turnout and oversight over the state's largest school district. Absent this change, MPS board governance could also be reformed by shifting to a model of appointed Board of School directors.



Call to action: **Focus on all students**

Access to a quality K-12 school for all students is MMAC's goal.

The delivery of a quality education provides a key building block not only for future skill development, but for citizenship. This makes investment in K-12 education a foundational role of government as the benefits are both individual and societal.

Beyond the tragic loss of life from COVID, the most lasting impact will come from the loss of learning that occurred as young students were disconnected from this K-12 education. We can use this crisis to reaffirm a commitment to the equitable delivery of quality education, and to remind ourselves why we support parents having choice in where they educate their children.

We have the opportunity of a significant state surplus, proven quality schools, and engaged parents to make the investment needed to raise student achievement and overcome the impact of the pandemic. At the top of that list of investments is providing per pupil funding that substantially closes the \$5,000-\$6,000 per student funding gap for independent charter and private schools in the MPCP program. We ignore this opportunity at the peril to both the individual getting an education, and the society in which they will contribute.

Now is that crisis, now is that opportunity, and now is that time.