

M³ = MPS, MATC, and UWM

Aligning Forces to Ensure Pathways to Student Success

The Concept:

Milwaukee is a thriving city with many advantages and resources that make it a wonderful place to live, learn, and work. However, Milwaukee also garners attention for many of the wrong reasons, often involving poverty and lack of opportunity. Thus, we are a **tale of two cities**: fortunate citizens who have access to excellent schools of their choice, fulfilling jobs, and comprehensive health care, but also disenfranchised populations faced with limited access to essential resources and challenging economic prospects. Research has long shown that a region's **economic success is tied to the local educational attainment**, and that earnings and employment levels are higher for those with post-secondary education. While there are signs of improvement and proven examples of success, the current trend shows that overall MPS students' academic proficiency and graduation rates lag behind the statewide averages. This is particularly troubling in light of projections that over half of all jobs in 2018 will require a postsecondary certificate or degree, and the disturbingly low college completion rates among Wisconsin students. The **success of MPS students can be the answer to many problems** facing the metropolitan Milwaukee region including: closing the achievement gap, providing trained workers to meet the need of business and industry, extending access to middle class lifestyles, strengthening the tax base and regional economy, and making social improvements in poverty levels, decreasing crime, and for the well-being of Wisconsin citizens, their families, and communities.

With an emphasis on our overlapping urban educational and research missions, we propose to combine and leverage the efforts of **MPS, MATC, and UWM**, the three largest urban and public educational entities of our respective types in Wisconsin to close the achievement and completion gaps. **Together, MPS, MATC, and UWM** (known collectively as **M³** or "M cubed") will create a road map for students that leads to a seamless transition from high school to higher education, resulting in needed skills, income, and social equity for our citizens, and the needed human capital for our region. By **marshaling the resources of the three largest educational entities**, **M³** will build on the "shoulders of giants" to contribute to and strengthen the good work that many people and organizations are already doing. The **M³** consortium, in partnership with others, will harness and leverage the collective expertise, partnership, and infrastructures to produce focused and measurable solutions to **positively impact the Milwaukee population and economy**.

The overarching goals of **M³** are to:

- 1) Raise students' college and career aspirations, readiness, and success by offering well-designed services and support.
- 2) Educate students' families and communities about the value of post-secondary learning.
- 3) Align curriculum and services from middle school to post-secondary education.
- 4) Create and cultivate a culture of learning in which there is an expectation to continue education after high school.

- 5) Positively influence the Milwaukee community by engaging the student voice, providing safe spaces and building awareness of equality and inclusion issues.

Goal 1: Raise Aspirations, Readiness, and Success of Students

M³ will raise students' college and career aspirations, readiness, and success by offering well-designed services and support, particularly for low-income, first-generation, and marginalized/underrepresented students; encourage and facilitate students' thinking about and planning for learning beyond high school; educate families and communities about the value of post-secondary learning; and develop a common approach, language, and understanding regarding the options available to students and families in Milwaukee, including:

- Students think about and plan for post-secondary education, facilitated by the following: M³ will forge matriculation agreements and partnerships within schools and with pivotal community partners and employers to create a **blueprint for MPS students** to navigate and plan their future educational aspirations by supporting the development of the six constructs of college and career readiness in all students: Engagement, Mindset, Learning Process, Critical Thinking, Social Skills, and Transition Knowledge.
- M³ partners work collaboratively to ensure smooth transitions for students between partner institutions, including:
 - Every MPS student is exposed to and will have the opportunity to earn a credential/post-secondary credit and/or work experience from a technical college or university before they graduate;
 - Every student has the opportunity to experience a smooth transition between high school, two-year and 4-year colleges/universities, including an accelerated path in which there is a seamless pathway from technical college to a university to allow for completion of a Bachelor's degree in a timeframe consistent with that of a traditional Bachelor's degree; and
 - Career pathways are designed to provide academic strengthening as a student receives college credits leading to a certificate, technical diploma, and associate degree.
- "World of Work" is highlighted and involves area employers, real-world projects, internships, youth apprenticeships, intra- and entrepreneur skills, etc. Students will learn about current and future jobs, and the school, dedication, and work skills needed to succeed. This will also include the creation of mobile labs and/or purchase of learning resources for hands-on activities: battle bots, lab experiments, etc.; and creation of a Fabrication Laboratory (Fab Lab) where students can do project based learning.

Goal 2: Educate Families about the Value of Post-secondary Learning

M³ will educate students' families and communities about the value of post-secondary learning by including families in the planning and partnership through meaningful activities that involve education topics but also demonstrate the value of parental involvement and input.

- Each M³ partner offers well-designed services and support to bolster student success, including designated point people for each function/topic area;
- MPS parent coordinators are equipped with M³ tools and materials to share with students and their families to encourage and support completion of high school and the pursuit of post-secondary education, including parent workshops, homework assistance, career information, and tools for parents to complete their high school degree if they do;
- Every MPS parent coordinator serves as a liaison for parents with contacts at MATC or UWM and is available to provide answers, guidance, and information to families;
- Milwaukee community partners with pivotal ties to MPS students (e.g. Boys and Girls Club and similar organizations) have access to information from M³ to utilize their unique position in bolstering students' goals and aspirations
- Higher education recruitment efforts in MPS high schools are wide-spread and robust; and
- Effective and strong relationships exist between MPS, MATC, and UWM advisors, faculty, and administrators—as well as with any other linkages that matter.

Goal 3: Align Curriculum and Services from Middle School to Post-secondary Education

Curriculum and services will focus on the following:

- Giving students more opportunities to accelerate their learning
- Eliminating the need for post-secondary remediation;
- Guaranteeing pathways to associate degrees and bachelor's degrees;
- Strengthening career-technical programs to ensure that every high school graduate is college- and career-ready; and
- Aligning learning outcomes with the 21st century workplace.
- Aligning relevant curricular models with clear pathways to college, careers, and connections to the real world with coherent progression, including being on track for college/career by middle school and having courses (especially Math and English/Reading) in high school that prepare students for success in college or their career.
- Every MPS high school faculty and staff member knows what office or which person at MATC or UWM is available to provide answers, guidance, and information;
- MPS faculty have professional development opportunities to improve pedagogy/learning outcomes;
- Students are exposed to and have access to jointly sponsored STEM mentors who showcase careers and skills,
- Middle school students will be exposed to and participate in discussions of why education matters, “how-to” demonstrations about test taking, a framework of what they can expect to do in high school to be eligible for more education, career camps and planning discussions to explore job goals and clusters, and “field trips” to a technical school and/or university to see it for themselves;
- Starting freshman year, high school students will be exposed to and participate in discussions on how education can shape their futures, thinking about post-secondary education as a “when and how vs. if”, planning their class schedules to align with college/career readiness, and practical guidelines about the necessary steps they should be

- planning for and doing now to be able to go to a technical school or four-year college/university; and
- Students successfully graduate from high school and are accepted into college.

Goal 4: Create and Cultivate the Culture of Learning and Education after High School

M³ will generate programs and financial assistance resources designed to instill hope and aspiration that lead to full-fledged belief in and concrete reality of academic progress and achievement as well as attending college as a viable option and expectation.

- M³ will raise funds for mentoring, advisors and scholarships, which will be ear-marked for any and all MPS students who are motivated to go on to post-secondary education;
- Through partnership, MPS, MATC, and UWM will jointly develop a plan to increase the number of students from Milwaukee that participate in paid summer internships; examples are the summer health care research training and medical and healthcare degrees, and the “Nurse Externship” program in which students work in paying nursing positions while completing their Bachelor’s degree; and
- Create a pathway for students to learn and build their skills through summer and afterschool programs such as boot camps, career exploration, co-teaching, and service learning.

Goal 5: Positively influence the Milwaukee community by engaging the student voice, providing safe spaces and building awareness of equality and inclusion issues

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