

Milwaukee Public Schools

Race to the Top District Executive Summary

The objective of the Race to the Top – District competitive application is to improve learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready.

Milwaukee Public Schools' Race to the Top -- District program will focus on three major initiatives to improve student achievement and educator effectiveness through personalized learning: (1) turning data into intelligence; (2) translating intelligence into action; and (3) optimizing and expanding the available portfolio of options through targeted use of technology and a variety of whole school educational models.

MPS will coordinate strategic, broad-based reform efforts around the major themes.

- (1) To turn data into intelligence, for example, the district will create user-friendly teacher dashboards that will allow access to full student profile information. The district will create individual learner profiles that include strengths, weaknesses, learning styles and interests of individual students to allow for targeted, personalized learning plans and interventions. To enhance the school-home connection, MPS will make student data more accessible to parents and families through technology systems.
- (2) To turn intelligence into action and to strengthen the student-teacher connection, the district will reform teacher evaluation processes and professional development offerings, and will allow teachers to select from an array of professional development resources that will increase their abilities to strengthen classroom instruction and improve student achievement. MPS will address this in several ways:
 - a. First, the district will enhance the current evaluation system pilot to rate instructional practice at a more granular level, and will use these ratings to match teachers to professional development opportunities that best meet their needs and allow individual teachers to work on improving instructional practices in more targeted ways. As a result, teachers will be more effective in meeting the wide variety of student needs.
 - b. Second, the district will make student data accessible and *actionable* by mapping curricular resources to individual student needs and providing teachers with a practical “bank” of effective strategies and interventions from which they can draw to make immediate changes in classroom instruction.
 - c. Finally, the district will optimize its existing processes and staff resources (e.g., School Improvement Plans, math and literacy coaches, and other school supports provided through the regional executive offices) to better translate school-level improvement goals into classroom-level goals and align school-based professional development for teachers to teachers' needs and individual classroom situations.

(3) To optimize and expand the available portfolio of school options for students, the district will pilot three approaches:

- a. Select a subset of MPS schools to experiment with creative uses of technology in small group sessions during class periods to allow for a more targeted, individualized and engaging experience for students. Teachers in specific grades or subject areas in selected schools will be able to experiment with blended learning models. For example, while a teacher is spending time with one small group, the remaining three to four groups will have access to online content that allows them to study and learn at their own pace. Students will also be able to take online assessments that will give teachers real-time data on student progress and allow them to use their time with the next small group more effectively.
- b. Open several new schools in the district that use a whole school blended learning model (all grades/all subjects). This could be done in different formats, with some formats being close to (a) above and some being much more extreme – for example, students spend 80% plus of the instructional time in school interacting with online content and about 20% of the time getting individual supports from teachers. In this version of the blended learning model, students can advance as their abilities allow, rather than in groups within a grade level.
- c. Extend the reach of innovative teachers and courses to the maximum number of students by offering the courses online. Online learning will allow the district to expand content offerings, further engaging a wide, diverse student body. This new educational model will include targeted instructional delivery methods to serve specific subgroups, such as ELL/bilingual, gifted and talented, or special education. The courses will be offered through unique classroom and school day designs configured to meet students “where they are” academically and socially and maximize their potential for successful academic outcomes.