



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The MPA Implementation Team work group #3 (Teacher and Principal Quality) has been identifying characteristics of a high-performing urban classroom.

The characteristics include:

- Active engagement of student learners
- Cultural responsiveness
- High expectations based on learning targets
- Strategic instructional choices
- Routine use of a variety of assessments
- Partnerships with families and the community
- Collaboration with colleagues
- Impassioned, engaged adult learners

A list of indicators for each characteristic still needs to be developed.

We hope that there will be rich school-based discussions of the characteristics among learning teams and school staffs. The purpose is to create conversations among colleagues to improve the practice of teaching and learning. Call me at (414) 270-1701 with feedback from your staff discussions.

—Christine Anderson, Ph.D.
Executive Director, MPA

Our Primary Goals:

1. Improve teacher and principal quality
2. Increase student achievement at all educational levels
3. Address systematic issues across educational institutions

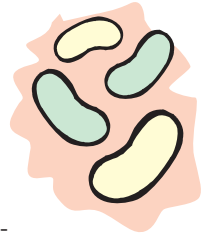
We address these goals through our Implementation Team, which has four work groups: Comprehensive Math and Literacy; Tutoring and Family Literacy; Teacher and Principal Quality; and Research and Evaluation.

Bean seeds and rubrics

With thanks to Jan-Marie Weiler, classroom teacher

MPS' **Golda Meir Elementary School**, where comprehensive literacy and mathematics are thriving, hosted its annual science fair and community feedback day in mid-March. This year's theme was plants. Children used the scientific method to conduct experiments at home, some of them planting bean seeds or nurturing ivy while changing the variables of water, light and soil. They made displays showing their conclusions. It was an eight-week endeavor on students' homework agendas, and required teacher support in timeline-planning.

The projects were evaluated with a rubric by each of ten classroom teachers. Community volunteers, including Master Gardeners, used the same rubric as they visited with students. This gave each student another chance to orally present and to receive feedback from someone other than the classroom teacher or their parents. Three hundred children took part, representing 100% of the Meir student body.



Wallace Foundation steps up

The MPA is approved for funding by the Wallace Foundation in the "State Action for Education Leadership Project II." Wisconsin is a "showcase state" for the grant. As such, the state will expect the MPA to share its experience nationwide. The grant will help MPS review issues associated with the master principal licensure process and PI 34.

Embrace the challenge

A national conference titled "Embrace the Challenge: Closing the Achievement Gaps through Partnerships and Leadership Development" will be held in Milwaukee during the summer of 2006.

The strands of the conference will be *Partnerships, Closing the Achievement Gaps and Leadership*. The co-chairs of the Partnerships strand are **Linda Post** and **Steve Percy**, UWM, and the MTEA's **Dennis Oulahan**. The Closing the Achievement Gaps strand is to be co-chaired by **Aquine Jackson** and **Rogers Onick**, both of MPS. The Leadership co-chairs are Director **Tom Balistreri**, Milwaukee Board of School Directors and **Flora Odom Flag**, MPS.

The co-chairs of the conference are UWM's Dean of Education **Alfonzo Thurman**, MPS' **Dan Donder** and **Janie Hatton** and MPA's **Christine Anderson**.

If you would like to serve on a committee to help shape the conference, contact Christine Anderson at (414) 270-1701.

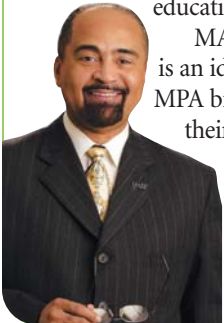
A Teachers Network

Milwaukee Board of School Directors President **Peter Blewett** and MPA's **Christine Anderson** are reviewing formation of a **Teachers Network** to help support action research for MPS teachers related to shaping public policy. Teachers Network is a nationwide, non-profit education organization that identifies and connects innovative teachers exemplifying professionalism and creativity within public school systems. Teachers selected to be fellows conduct action research in their classrooms and use their research to improve classroom practice. Fellows meet monthly to share their findings with one another and with state and local policymakers. **The Holmes Partnership** will help sponsor the fellows. **Sam Carmen**, MTEA Executive Director, is on the Holmes Partnership Board of Directors and **Alfonzo Thurman** is the newly elected president.

MEET YOUR PARTNER

In each issue we will profile one of the MPA's board members, or members of the executive committee.

Dr. Darnell E. Cole has been president of **Milwaukee Area Technical College**, the Midwest's largest community-based technical college, since 2001. MATC serves 57,000 students annually at four major campuses and through online learning. Among Dr. Cole's priorities is creating partnerships to benefit students. During his leadership, MATC has formed numerous partnerships with K-12 schools, four-year colleges and universities and area businesses — all with the goal of growing student access to higher education and improving career success.



MATC's partnership with the MPA is an ideal fit. The opportunity that the MPA brings to young students enhances their learning experiences and helps to prepare them for the next important steps in their lives. Dr. Cole's vision includes expanding MATC's role in the academic life of young students.

Newsmakers

Sherrie Akinsanya of Custer High School, along with **Kathy Swope**, **Katrina Fisher** and **Angela Ford Patton** of Teaching & Learning, gave a presentation to the MPA Board of Directors on Classroom Assessments Based on Standards (CABS).

MPS Superintendent William Andrekopoulos' article on school reforms ran in the March 13 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. It's at <http://www.jsonline.com/news/editorials/mar05/308707.asp>.

Marleen Pugach of **UWM** will be honored by the Council for Exceptional Children in April in Baltimore where she will receive the Teacher Education Division Merrill Award for Excellence in Teacher Education.

Kellie Carson of **Muir Middle School** created a math camp for eighty 8th graders.

Members of PK-16 Councils from across the state of Tennessee attended a presentation March 3-4 on the MPA partnership. Presenters included **Alfonzo Thurman**, UWM; **Mike Thompson**, DPI; **Dan Donder**, MPS; **Gerard Randall**, Private Industry Council; and **Christine Anderson**, MPA.

Congratulations!

Eleven MPS schools were awarded Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership (MMP) Mini-grants for *Improving Classroom Practice through CABS*. The schools are **Browning**, **Garland**, **Goodrich**, **Grantosa**, **Barton**, **Riley**, **Philipp**, **Townsend**, **Milwaukee German Immersion**, **Hawley** and **Engleburg**.

Pay tribute to an educator

Pay tribute to an educator you admire with the UWM School of Education's **Educator Honor Roll**. More than 65,000 people will read your tribute in the October 7 issue of *The Business Journal*, in its *Education is the Best Investment* special section.

Education Honor Roll categories include top teachers in all subjects and mentors such as administrators from public, private, choice and charter schools.

The \$25 donation for each educator or school honored benefits the UWM School of Education Scholarship Fund. For more information or to receive an Honor Roll form, call (414) 229-6554. You may also e-mail soeinfo@uwm.edu or log on to www.soe.uwm.edu and click on the *Education is the Best Investment* icon.

Summer institute

The *Closing the Achievement Gap Summer Institute*, sponsored by the UWM School of Education Outreach, is designed to help teachers, administrators and others deepen their understanding of research related to meeting the needs of each child. It will provide an opportunity for educators to reflect on their practice.

Participants will leave the conference understanding how to build their own professional development plans (PDPs) for licensure under PI 34. School and system leadership teams can participate as a group to refine their improvement efforts and build their personal PDPs linked to the research on student learning.

Keynote speakers include **Gloria Ladson-Billings**, Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UW-Madison; **Brian McNulty**, VP of Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL); and **Pedro Noguera**, Professor and Urban Sociologist at the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University.

A graduate credit option is available. Conference dates are June 20-21, 2005. Deadline for registration is June 10. Go to www.edoutreach.soe.uwm.edu or call (414) 229-5255 for a brochure.

Call for presenters

The **Alliance for Excellent Education** has a breakfast series that explores interventions in adolescent literacy. As students, teachers, schools and districts try to meet the goals of *No Child Left Behind*, the demand for literacy interventions at the secondary level is increasing.

The Alliance invites program representatives to apply to present at the breakfast series extending through December 2005. Programs will be selected on the following criteria: Key Elements, Age Appropriateness, Applicability and Effectiveness.

To learn more about the criteria, refer to <http://www.all4ed.org/publications/ReadingNext/ReadingNext.pdf>.

Submit a one-page proposal addressing the criteria to Jeremy Ayers at jayers@all4ed.org by Friday, April 15, 2005 with the subject line LITERACY PROPOSAL. If you have questions, feel free to contact Jeremy by e-mail or by telephone at (202) 828-0828.

Selections will be announced and presentation schedules released on May 2, 2005.

\$2.5 million on the line

Public school districts in **Milwaukee** and **Seattle** are contenders for \$2.5 million from the **National Education Association Foundation (NEA)**. In Milwaukee, the money would be used to support the work of learning teams in their efforts to close the student achievement gaps.

The application process included a site visit from an NEA team. Many thanks to the **Richard and Ethel Herzfeld and Assurant Health learning teams** for meeting with the NEA site visitors. Special thanks to **River Trail and Lee Elementary Schools** for opening their doors for classroom observations. The **MMABSE** (Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Black School Educators) **Parent Commission** also met with the NEA visitors. The NEA's board of directors will make its decision on the grant funding in early June.