



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to *Connections* — the MPA's newsletter. We'll publish four times a year. This first issue will highlight our initiatives.

Look to *Connections* for updates on how the partnership is meeting its mission: to have all children on grade level in reading, writing and mathematics. We'll highlight the work of literacy coaches, math lead teachers and others who have made a difference.

Please call me at (414) 270-1701 if you have a story to share, a colleague to congratulate or want to highlight the work of your learning team.

Connections will make our work more consistent, profound and lasting.

—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.

Department of Education shines light on MPA

The MPA is highlighted in a 2004 report published by the Department of Education. *The Secretary's Third Annual Report on Teacher Quality*, which is circulated to every college and university in the United States, features an article on the MPA. Included is the statement "Since its inception, the Milwaukee Partnership Academy has evolved into a system-to-system reform model that focuses on the entire Milwaukee Public School system."

Learning teams



Learning teams increase student learning with an initial emphasis on literacy and mathematics. The teams collect and interpret data for the school's education plan, provide support to teachers, enable professional development and help create positive conditions in the schools. Learning teams are working in each MPS school.

The MPA is seeking funding to support learning team meetings on a regular basis. The Richard and Ethel Herzfeld Foundation and Assurant Health Foundation have taken the lead in the city to support the important work of learning teams. Herzfeld awarded grants to **Edison, Happy Hill, Hi-Mount Boulevard, Kilbourn, LaFollette, Pierce, Sarah Scott, Sixty-eighth Street, Twenty-first Street** and **Washington High**. Our thanks go to **Mark Warhus**, Program Manager, Herzfeld. Assurant Health Foundation awarded grants to **Palmer, Bell, Audubon** and **Lady Pitts**. Our thanks go to **Rob Guilbert**, President, Assurant Health Foundation.

Grant boosts library efforts for youngest students

Pam Penn, co-chair of MPA work group Family Literacy and Tutoring, led the way in securing \$316,000 in funding to improve literacy through school libraries. An MPS grant proposal was chosen for full funding from the federal program "Improving Literacy Through School Libraries." The grant will enable library media specialists at ten targeted elementary school sites to expand their efforts for students in kindergarten through third grade. The sites are: **Academy of Accelerated Learning, Allen-Field, Browning, Clarke, Green Bay, Hayes, Honey Creek, Hi-Mount, LaFollette** and **Riley**. With the grant money, libraries at these sites can offer extended day hours and Saturday or summer programming, along with visits of nationally recognized authors.

Tennessee visitors

On November 18 and 19, approximately 30 visitors came to Milwaukee from Knoxville, Tennessee to learn more about the MPA. The group, which included members of the school board of Knoxville Public Schools, toured **South Division High School** and **Hartford Avenue School**. They attended an MPA Board of Directors meeting. The visitors are as interested as we are in research-based strategies, action plans and documentation of results instead of quick fixes. Our collaboration with Knoxville will continue.

MEET YOUR PARTNER

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

Sr. Joel Read, now active with the **Greater Milwaukee Committee (GMC)**, stepped down from her position as Alverno College President in 2003 after 35 years. During her tenure, Alverno became the first Milwaukee area college to offer weekend courses for women who were not of the traditional college age. While she was at the helm, the school completed a \$45 million capital fund campaign.



Read is a past president of the American Association for Higher Education. She now chairs the GMC Education Committee. Read says, "The GMC is fully behind the efforts of the MPA and we will do all we can to see that they succeed."

Great strides in two years

Two years ago in MPS, one out of two children in third grade were reading on grade level. Now, two out of three are on grade level. Congratulations, teachers, administrators and students.

Newsmakers

Dr. Patricia Ellis will leave MPS for Cardinal Stritch University and a new job title: Associate Vice-President for University Outreach. Pat has led MPS' Office of Academic Excellence. She'll continue to serve with the MPA.

Dr. Marleen Pugach and **Dr. Dan Donder** were MPA representatives at the Carnegie Corporation of New York Teachers for a New Era fall conference in San Francisco.

The MPA is a participant in a DPI grant from the **Wallace Foundation** for \$425,000 to support the work of building leadership skills in our principal coaches.

Debbie Kuether, a literacy coach and an educator at Kilbourn School, is a National Board Certified Teacher.

Congratulations to **Deb Lindsey** and her team in Assessment and Accountability at MPS for leading the schools through the important November WKCE and Terra Nova testing. Thanks to all the teachers and principals for their efforts during these assessments.

Welcome to **Dennis Oulahan**, the treasurer of MTEA, and newest MTEA representative on the implementation team.

Michelle Trevino, a literacy coach at South Division High School, was part of a DPI-led seminar to Laos and Thailand this summer.

Tutoring, family literacy

The MPA is moving forward with a Tutoring and Family Literacy initiative. It's designed to provide a tutor or advocate for every MPS student. Not only will it assist students with learning, but it will provide parents with services such as GED training and computer literacy. The goals are:

- Strong parental involvement
- Uniform materials of consistent quality
- Volunteers from across the community, including retirees and university students

A coordinator for the program is needed. The implementation team is working with the MPA board and MPS to fill this position as soon as possible.

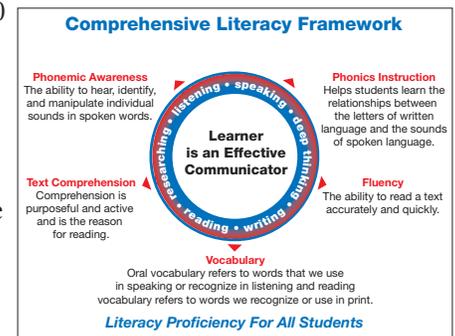
Strengthening learning teams for mathematics

The Milwaukee Mathematics Partnership (MMP) is an initiative of the MPA. It works to both improve the math achievement of MPS students, and to better the math preparation of teachers at UWM and MATC. The MMP is in its second year of implementation with funding from the National Science Foundation.

Six math teaching specialists have been hired to work with **Henry Kranendonk**, the MPS Mathematics Curriculum Specialist, and Principal Investigator **DeAnn Huinker**, UWM, along with **Kevin McLeod**, Co-principal Investigator. The specialists include **Pandora Bedford**, **Angela Ford**, **Janis Freckmann**, **Rosann Hollinger**, **Beth Schefelker** and **Lois Womack**.

In 2003-04 about \$200,000 was distributed directly to school learning teams for implementation of MMP actions plans for embedded professional development. Due to its success last year, the amount of funds allocated for these plans has been increased.

The MMP has funded the initiative to identify and train approximately 200 math teacher leaders in schools across the district. In addition, the MMP offers professional development courses for teachers and administrators. It is developing guidelines for mathematics mini-grants to schools. Contact your math specialist and visit the Web site www.mmp.uwm.edu for more on the work of the MMP.



Literacy coaches

The first major strategy defined by the MPA was Comprehensive Literacy. This strategy was developed during the 2001-2002 school year and implemented with literacy coaches and specialists. Having a literacy coach in each building enables teachers to engage in job embedded professional development. The primary function of a literacy coach is to interact with classroom teachers by modeling lessons, providing feedback to teachers as they try new strategies, and improving the quality of literacy training. This concept has been extended with the introduction of coaches for each principal in MPS.