



Characteristics of a High Performing Urban Classroom

*Closing the Achievement Gaps in
Milwaukee Public Schools*

Guide for MPS Parents/Guardians



Milwaukee Public Schools



Milwaukee Public Schools

 **Parent Assistant**



Parent Assistant

A new way for parents to be involved!

A quick click for parents to access information and feedback about their child's grades, attendance and non-school days, transportation pickup and drop-off times, positive comments on a student's achievement, teacher feedback about weakness or challenges, and other school concerns.

For more information, please visit
mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us

INTRODUCTION

Superintendent William G. Andrekopoulos

Milwaukee Public Schools is an urban school district dedicated to creating and sustaining high performing classrooms that are structured to meet the learning needs of all students.

We published a guide for our educators called *Characteristics of a High Performing Urban Classroom*. It outlines the eight traits of a top-notch classroom. It lists the evidence we expect to see when teachers are aligning their curriculum and setting high expectations for students.

Now, parents, this is a companion guide for you: *Characteristics of a High Performing Urban Classroom: What families should expect to see*. If your child's classroom environment is focused on achievement, you should see activities that are listed on the pages of this booklet.

MPS staff works hard to help students work at their full potential. We are glad to have our families be an active part of the process.



*Milwaukee Public Schools
Superintendent William G. Andrekopoulos*

William G. Andrekopoulos

NATIONAL PARENT INVOLVEMENT STANDARDS

Effective parent involvement programs include activities that are addressed by the following six standards:

- I. Communicating** – Communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.
- II. Parenting** – Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
- III. Student learning** – Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
- IV. Volunteering** – Parents are welcome in the school and their support and assistance are sought.
- V. School decision making and advocacy** – Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect the children and families.
- VI. Collaborating with community** – Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families and student learning.

Copies of the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs can be purchased from the National Education Service. Call 1(800) 733-6786 and ask for item number BKF175.

**MPS believes families
are valuable partners!**



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

High Performing Urban Classroom

This book is meant to help you understand what makes a high-performing classroom. It lists what you, as a parent or guardian, should see if the teacher and students are working as a team to succeed.

The book is organized by characteristics.

Each page lists a separate *characteristic* or goal of a high-performing classroom. Beneath that characteristic, look for a description of the *evidence* that students and teachers are working together to attain that goal. For instance, on page 5, see the first characteristic:

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNERS

Under that heading, read through the EVIDENCE listed for that characteristic. The elements of evidence are signs that the classroom has active engagement of students. For example, **Students:**

- Share responsibility for assessing their progress
- Construct knowledge by interpreting, analyzing and evaluating information
- Use high levels of critical thinking skills
- Are engaged in classroom activities, etc.

SUGGESTIONS FROM DR. AQUINE JACKSON, OFFICE OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT MPS CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER:



*Milwaukee Public Schools
Chief Academic Officer
Aquine Jackson, Ph.D.*

Take the book with you when you visit your child's school.

Look for evidence that the classrooms are performing at high levels. Use the book during Parent/Teacher Conferences to discuss the learning environment with your child's teacher.

Take notes on the pages provided in the back of this booklet.

The notes will help you remember what you saw on your last school visit or what you discussed with school staff.

Remember — you and the school staff are partners in your child's education. Please ask questions and talk about what your child is doing in class. Your connection with the school is truly needed and welcomed.

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aquine Jackson".

Aquine Jackson, Ph.D.
Chief Academic Officer

WISCONSIN STANDARDS FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND LICENSURE

- 1 Teachers know the subjects they are teaching.
- 2 Teachers know how children grow.
- 3 Teachers understand that children learn differently.
- 4 Teachers know how to teach.
- 5 Teachers know how to manage a classroom.
- 6 Teachers communicate well.
- 7 Teachers are able to plan different kinds of lessons.
- 8 Teachers know how to test for student progress.
- 9 Teachers are able to evaluate themselves.
- 10 Teachers are connected with other teachers and the community.

WISCONSIN STANDARDS FOR ADMINISTRATOR DEVELOPMENT AND LICENSURE

To receive a license in a school administrator category in Wisconsin, an applicant shall complete an approved program in school administration and demonstrate proficient performance in the knowledge, skills and dispositions under all of the following standards.

- 1 The administrator has an understanding of and demonstrates competence in the Ten Teacher Standards.
- 2 The administrator leads by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared by the school community.
- 3 The administrator manages by advocating, nurturing and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to pupil learning and staff professional growth.
- 4 The administrator ensures management of the organization, operations, finances and resources for a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.
- 5 The administrator models collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs and mobilizing community resources.
- 6 The administrator acts with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.
- 7 The administrator understands, responds to and interacts with the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context that affects schooling.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT OF STUDENT LEARNERS

Teachers empower students to achieve at their highest levels. Teachers use in-depth knowledge of content areas and a literacy-based focus to facilitate students' active engagement in learning.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 3, 6

EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR...

Students will:

- Build and use knowledge in a meaningful way.
- Explain their answers using what they know and sharing examples.
- Participate in classroom discussions, demonstrations and group projects.
- Apply what they learn to real life.

Teachers will:

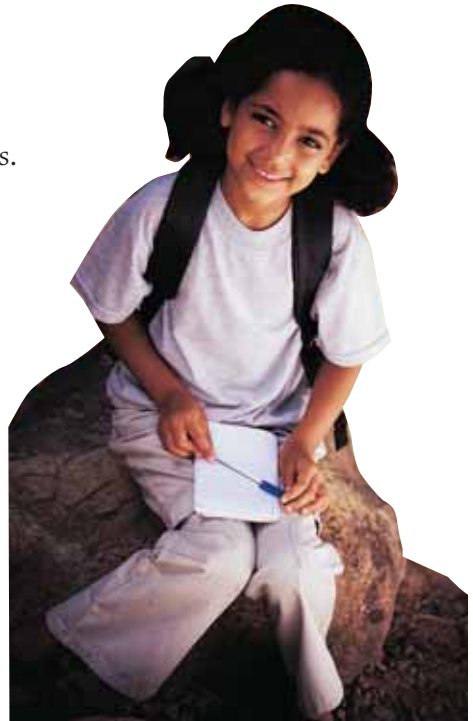
- Provide learning activities that challenge students.
- Use questions that require an explanation rather than a yes/no response.
- Set up their classroom so students are active and have chances to work in groups.
- Have routines and procedures in place so students can participate actively in class.

Schools will:

- Give teachers training so that they learn up-to-date teaching methods.
- Visit classrooms and talk to teachers about what students are doing.
- Give teachers time to think about how they teach and plan activities for student learning.
- Make sure staff is teaching in ways that keep students actively learning.

Central Services Support will:

- Show administrators how to give feedback to teachers about their teaching methods.
- Allow school leaders to provide face-to-face and on-line teacher training.
- Provide resources that support active student participation.
- Give teachers and school leaders skills and knowledge to teach challenging lessons that meet the needs of every student.



CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

Teachers know the diverse racial, ethnic, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of their students and embed this knowledge throughout the curriculum to foster high levels of student learning.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 7

EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR...

Students will:

- Demonstrate genuine caring, acceptance and respect for all people.
- Understand other cultures.
- Connect information to outside experiences.
- Share stories, values and traditions in their own culture and compare them to other cultures.

Teachers will:

- Respect the students' first language.
- Use students' cultural backgrounds and experiences to connect what they teach.
- Make classrooms safe to discuss differences and unequal treatment of people.
- Demand and expect all students to learn.

School will:

- Make sure students' cultures are respected.
- Admit and deal with the achievement gaps.
- Provide training to teachers so they understand cultural differences.
- Determine cultural needs of the students and parents while learning about their cultures.

Central Services Support will:

- Provide face-to-face and on-line training.
- Provide cultural responsiveness by setting an example.
- Provide cultural resources in the Bilingual/Multicultural office, Title I Parent Centers, and the Parent Information Center.



HIGH EXPECTATIONS BASED ON LEARNING TARGETS

Teachers and students hold and communicate high expectations for complex student learning based on the MPS Learning Targets.



Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7

Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 3, 6

EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR...

Students will:

- Know the Learning Target being taught in class.
- Apply learning to new situations.
- Think and work using higher levels of thinking skills.
- Have work that challenges but does not frustrate them.

Teachers will:

- Make sure that every Learning Target is taught so that students develop deep knowledge and skills.
- Begin teaching units by setting clear learning goals based on the Learning Targets.
- Provide a variety of assessments for students based on the Learning Targets.
- Keep a positive attitude by being honest with themselves about how they feel about students.



Schools will:

- Check that teachers address all Learning Targets in all content areas according to the school curriculum.
- Review and include MPS Learning Targets when developing academic SMAART goals for their Educational Plan each year.
- Have an ongoing conversation with parents, students and community members around the Learning Targets.
- Provide training based on student needs.

Central Services Support will:

- Provide Learning Targets that are developed from the state standards and connected to the state tests.
- Provide face-to-face and on-line training.
- Make sure that schools and teachers follow NCLB guidelines, including special education guidelines.
- Provide samples of valid classroom-based assessments.

STRATEGIC INSTRUCTIONAL CHOICES

Teachers ensure that all students are meaningfully challenged. Teachers strategically select methods, differentiate instruction and use technology to foster student learning.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 3

EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR...

Students will:

- Participate in learning activities in all subjects.
- Teach one another by reading, explaining, and discussing with each other.
- Participate in activities to prove what they think is the right answer.
- Regularly choose books, writing topics, research projects or group members.

Teachers will:

- Change instruction based on how students perform to meet students' needs.
- Use assessments to inform and improve instruction.
- Make sure students have many chances to learn new things.
- Use technology (computers) to improve how they teach.
- Have learning teams so teachers can discuss and improve how they teach.
- Have literacy coaches and math teacher leaders who show teachers how to teach.

Schools will:

- Revise teaching and learning strategies in their Educational Plan.
- Make sure grade level and subject area teachers can meet to review student work and discuss classroom assessments.

Central Services Support will:

- Come up with ways to improve student learning.
- Have face-to-face and on-line training focusing on how to teach.
- Help with the Educational Plan review process.
- Provide technology (computers) and training.



ROUTINE USE OF A VARIETY OF ASSESSMENTS

Teachers and students use multiple sources of data to assess progress and guide the effectiveness of instruction.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 2, 7, 8, 9
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 4

EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR...

Students will:

- Review assessed data as a way to check how well they have learned information.
- Lead the parent conferences and explain their work to parents.
- Keep track of how well they do on their assignments.
- Make their own challenging goals for learning.

Teachers will:

- Engage in self-reflection of their own instructional practices in order to enhance their effectiveness.
- Tell parents and students how the students perform on a regular basis.
- Use assessments, written and oral, that measure what students are taught and what they learn.
- Work with the parents to identify a family contact person.



Schools will:

- Make sure teachers have time to plan lessons based on the learning goals.
- Give training on assessments.
- Provide a variety of assessments that are used at the end of every project.
- Set specific learning goals for the school.

Central Services will:

- Provide training on assessments and research results.
- Provide training on the use of assessment results to improve student learning, reduce the achievement gaps and come up with ways to improve learning.
- Provide technology (computers) to make it easier for schools to review assessment results.
- Monitor, provide support and make sure that NCLB guidelines are followed, including special education guidelines.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY

Teachers initiate, develop and maintain positive working relationships with all students' families and the broader urban community to support student learning.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 7, 9, 10
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR...

Students will:

- Participate in learning activities in all subjects.
- Teach one another by reading, explaining, and discussing with each other.
- Participate in activities to prove what they think is the right answer.
- Regularly choose books, writing topics, team members or research projects.

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Schools will:

- Revise teaching and learning strategies in their Educational Plan.
- Make sure grade level and subject area teachers can meet to review student work and discuss classroom assessments.

Central Services Support will:

- Come up with ways to improve student learning.
- Have face-to-face and on-line training focusing on how to teach.
- Help with the Educational Plan review process.
- Provide technology (computer) and training.



COLLABORATION WITH COLLEAGUES

Teachers develop and maintain productive professional working relationships with colleagues to enhance student learning.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 9, 10
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR...

Students and Families will:

- Show that they are reaching their goals.
- Seek help from any staff member.
- Share materials and ideas.
- Work as a team to complete assignments.

Teachers will:

- Work with other teachers/staff to address concerns, solve problems and create ways to achieve learning goals.
- Help other teachers become better teachers.
- Work together to look at student work and study lesson plans.
- Watch other teachers who teach well so that they can learn from them.

School will:

- Help new teachers.
- Expect teachers to work together and respect one another.
- Focus all staff meeting time on real ways to improve student learning and the classroom.
- Support teachers who work together to become better teachers.

Central Services Support will:

- Help teachers by “coaching” them where they need help.
- Help teachers to share what they do and to teach well.
- Monitor, provide support and make sure NCLB guidelines are followed, including special education guidelines.
- Share best practices with other schools and districts so that all students can reach their goals.



IMPASSIONED, ENGAGED ADULT LEARNERS

Teachers are invested adult learners who motivate their students to become impassioned, engaged learners.

Related Wisconsin Teacher Standards 1, 2, 3, 5, 6
Wisconsin Administrator Standards 1, 2, 3, 4

EVIDENCE: WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE AND HEAR...

Students will:

- Explain what they will learn, why they are learning it and what meaning it has in their lives.
- Feel that they have a relationship with the teacher.
- Challenge themselves to continue learning.
- Feel safe and comfortable in the classroom.



Teachers will:

- Help students create their own goals for learning.
- Use professional resources regularly (research, lead teacher and specialist) to change the way they teach so students learn better.
- Continue to be lifelong learners.
- Make sure that students see them learning.

Schools will:

- Help teacher leaders and literacy coaches.
- Make sure teachers have time to take classes to become better teachers.
- Provide learning opportunities on banking days.
- Provide regular time and space for teachers to share and learn from each other.

Central Services Support will:

- Encourage teachers to work together and become leaders in the district.
- Support learning opportunities for teams.
- Provide face-to-face and on-line opportunities.
- Make sure teachers are given hands-on experiences.



Notes

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Notes

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal blue lines across its entire width. The lines are thin and consistent in color, set against a plain white background. There are no margins, text, or other markings present on the page.

Say *Yes!* to MPS.

SEATS AVAILABLE IN MPS ELEMENTARY MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOLS!

- ✓ **Certified teachers and staff who inspire students with hands-on and real-world learning.**
- ✓ **Academic achievement focused on student strengths and positive learning experiences.**
- ✓ **Web technology integrated into classrooms.**
- ✓ **Learning Targets based on state standards.**
- ✓ **More than 24 schools with bilingual programs.**
- ✓ **Wisconsin's top provider of special education.**
- ✓ **Focused on results.**



Call today to enroll! (414) 475-8448

The classroom is the most important place in the district.



BE ON TIME!

The first day in session for most MPS schools is Tuesday, September 4. MPS year-round schools start August 6.

MPS ELEMENTARY/K8 SCHOOLS

Schools start at 7:45 a.m. Dismissal is either at 2:25 p.m. or 2:30 p.m.

Exception: The following schools begin at 9:00 a.m. and dismiss at either 3:40 p.m. or 3:45 p.m. – Allen Field, Craig Montessori, Fratney, Hayes, I.D.E.A.L., Milw. French Immersion, Milw. German Immersion, Morgandale, Sixty-Eighth Street, Storms Discovery and Storms Early Childhood, Urban Waldorf, WI Conservatory of Lifelong Learning.

MPS MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Schools start at 8:45 a.m. and dismiss at 3:38 p.m.

Exception: Northern Star will begin at 8:00 a.m. and dismiss at 3:05 p.m.

MPS HIGH SCHOOLS

Schools start at 8:35 a.m. and dismiss at 3:45 p.m.

Exception: The following schools begin at 7:30 a.m. and dismiss at 2:40 p.m. – ALAS, Kilmer, Milw. School of Entrepreneurship, New School for Community Service, and Reagan IB. Lady Pitts begins at 7:50 a.m. and dismisses at 3:00 p.m. The following three high schools start at 8:00 a.m. and dismiss at 3:00 or 3:10 p.m.: Community, Professional Learning Institute and School of Urban Planning and Architecture. WCLL starts classes at 9:00 a.m. and dismisses at 3:45 p.m.

Some MPS charter, contracted and partnership schools have other schedules. Check with your school. For more MPS information go to www.mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us or call Student Services at (414) 475-8448.



HEALTH & HYGIENE

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES, STRENGTHENING ACHIEVEMENT



Important Messages for Parents/Guardians:

- 1** Immunizations protect your child from the devastating effects of vaccine preventable diseases. Make sure your child is immunized and share his/her immunization record with the school.
- 2** Children who can't see can't learn. A professional eye exam before beginning school is a great way to ensure your child's eye health and help him/her achieve in the classroom.
- 3** Hand washing is the number one method of preventing illness and disease transmission. Remind your child to wash hands before eating, and after using the bathroom. Use soap and warm water. You should wash hands for the amount of time that it takes to sing the "ABCs".



Health Initiative:

Milwaukee Public Schools is helping to meet the health needs of children by increasing the number of school nurses in the district. School nurses will help ensure the health and safety of students by providing: health screenings, medication management, immunization assistance, chronic and communicable disease management, first aid and sudden illness care, substance abuse intervention, individual health plans and support, as well as health education and support.

Special Health Programs:

- Defibrillators
- Vision Screening
- School Nursing



Does your child need medication
during the school day?
See your MPS school office for a Medication
Permission and Instruction Form.



Milwaukee Public Schools



From doorstep to desktop.

*The most important part of your educational journey
starts with consistent attendance at school.*

Students with good attendance perform better in school, show strong achievement levels, and develop the confidence for long-term academic success. At MPS, we're committed to working with families to encourage consistent attendance in school.

For enrollment information, call (414) 475-8448 or visit
Student Services at 5225 W. Vliet St.

Milwaukee Public Schools — Believe it, achieve it!



Milwaukee Public Schools



Milwaukee Public Schools

SUPPORTING FOUNDATIONS FOR HIGH PERFORMING URBAN CLASSROOMS

CORE BELIEFS

Children Come First

Children are the center of the decision-making process.
We have high expectations and standards for all children.
Supportive services are provided to enable children to reach their full potential.
Equitable allocation of resources supports learning.

The Classroom is the Most Important Place in the District

Every child has an equitable opportunity to learn with an effective teacher.
Collaboration among staff promotes high levels of student achievement using best practices.
Professional development is embedded in the classroom.
Resources are directed to the classroom and focused on student achievement.

Leadership and Accountability are Keys to Our Success

Leadership articulates the vision and moves the organization forward.
Accountability holds us to high standards and expectations.
Principals are leaders in improving schools.
Every teacher is a leader and every leader is a teacher to ensure student success.

Central Services Supports Student Achievement

Central Services promotes and supports student achievement.
Central Services articulates an academic framework.
Central Services facilitates communication throughout the district and community using a variety of techniques.
Central Services holds school accountable through an evaluation system.

Families are Valuable Partners

Families support and assist us in educating their children.
We welcome and respect family involvement.
Opportunities are provided for parents to participate in key decision-making.
Communication between families and MPS personnel is important.

Community Partnerships Add Value

Community partnerships extend learning beyond the classroom.
Shared responsibility fosters student success.
The Milwaukee community and Milwaukee Public Schools value and support partnerships to increase capacity for teaching and learning.

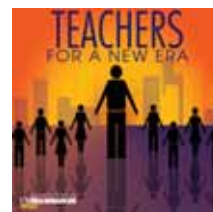


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www.milwaukee.k12.wi.us

Developed by the Milwaukee Partnership Academy's Principal and Teacher Quality Work Group with support from the Teachers for a New Era Project at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE It is the policy of the Milwaukee Public Schools that, as required by section 118.13, Wisconsin Statutes, no person will be denied admission to any public school or be denied the benefits of, or be discriminated against in any curricular, extracurricular, pupil services, recreational or other program or activity because of the person's sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability. This policy also prohibits discrimination under related federal statutes, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (race, color, and national origin), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (sex), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (disability), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability). The following individuals have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

- For Section 118.13, Wisconsin Statutes, federal Title II, or federal Title IX: *Jodi Searl-Wnorowski*, Special Services Administrator, Office of Special Services, Room 272, Milwaukee Public Schools, 5225 West Vliet St. P. O. Box 2181, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53201-2181
- For Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504): *Richard Brigham*, 504/ADA Coordinator for Students, MPS Department of Special Services, 5225 West Vliet St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53208. (414) 475-8139 TTD: (414) 475-8139