Superintendent’s Report – June

The Superintendent’s Report is designed to provide the Milwaukee Board of School Directors and the MPS community with an update on current activities underway to support the district goals of academic achievement; student, family and community engagement; and effective and efficient operations as they are aligned to the district’s eight strategic objectives:

- Closing the GAP
- Re-envisioning Partnerships
- Educating the Whole Child
- Communication & Outreach
- Redefining the MPS Experience
- Workforce Development
- Rethinking High Schools
- Organizational Processes

Meetings from late May through mid-June follow.

I gave the opening remarks at the United Way Campaign Cabinet meeting and introduced our newest committee, the Volunteer Engagement Committee, which I co-chair. Employee engagement builds strong teams, boosts morale and commitment, improves employee retention and future recruitment, allows individuals to utilize their skills and strengths and creates opportunities to develop future leaders. We are currently conducting a school supply drive for summer activities.

Mayor Barrett and I, along with Milwaukee area business and community organizations, announced the MPS Summer Programs kick-off. More than 90 MPS schools and playgrounds will be open as safe havens and places of learning during the summer months. Our K–8 Summer Academy has been expanded by 2,000 seats. We are launching our Freshman Bridge Academy for all incoming ninth graders. High schools will be able to participate in the credit recovery and attainment program. We are also offering a wide array of arts programs including summer music camps, jazz programs, Project Lead the Way science and engineering camps and a special overnight camp for young women to help them explore careers in technology, police, fire and emergency medical services. Most of the activities started the week of June 20. And of course, our Department of School Nutrition Services will be providing summer meals at more than 100 MPS locations, many of which will offer breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Eric Radomski, John Hill and I participated in the Minority Unemployment Task Force, chaired by Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and Senator Lena Taylor. We gave the Task Force an update on career and technical education programming, youth apprenticeship plans, opportunities for work-based learning, and academic and career planning.

I met with a number of Alderpersons to discuss the great need to keep our students safe and actively engaged this summer. I also met separately with the Milwaukee Police Department captains at their roll call meeting to discuss the same.
Eleven MPS students won Exemplary Soloist awards at the Wisconsin State Music Association’s (WSMA) State Solo and Ensemble Festival hosted by UW-Milwaukee on April 30. This award recognizes outstanding student soloists whose performances were truly exceptional – beyond what is typically expected for this age group. Mathew Tulloch and Isaiah Jones, Jr. both students at Riverside University High School, received a “1 rating” during the competition. Tulloch earned his soloist award for his performance on the tenor saxophone in the jazz improvisation solo category. Jones received his soloist award for his performance on the piano in the jazz improvisation category. Other honorees include:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pieter Ambrosius-Tolbert</td>
<td>Milwaukee High School of the Arts</td>
<td>Tenor Soloist and Musical Theater Soloist</td>
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<td>Lauren Barta</td>
<td>Reagan IB High School</td>
<td>Flute Soloist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claire Bilicki</td>
<td>Milwaukee High School of the Arts</td>
<td>Soprano Soloist</td>
</tr>
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<td>Tommie Conley</td>
<td>Bay View High School</td>
<td>Baritone or Bass Soloist</td>
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<td>Mystique Evans</td>
<td>Rufus King High School</td>
<td>Cello Soloist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dominika Lulewicz</td>
<td>Rufus King High School</td>
<td>Violin Soloist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joanna Rogowski</td>
<td>Reagan IB High School</td>
<td>Piano Soloist</td>
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<td>LaTora Smith</td>
<td>Milwaukee High School of the Arts</td>
<td>Soprano Soloist and Vocal Jazz Improvisation Soloist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natalija Walker</td>
<td>Reagan IB High School</td>
<td>Soprano Soloist</td>
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This summer, three MPS students will compete nationally in a showcase of career and technical education students. Barack Obama School of Career and Technical Education (BOSCTE) students Trevion Brownlee, Adrian Ellis and Maurice Pulley — along with their coach Dave Kontz — are headed to Louisville, Kentucky later this month for the 52nd annual National Leadership and Skills Conference (NLSC). They will also compete against nearly 6,000 other students from across the country in the SkillsUSA Championships. At the national championships, students work against the clock and each other, proving their expertise in occupations such as electronics, computer-aided drafting, precision machining, medical assisting and culinary arts. The students earned their spots at the national competition by placing first in the statewide contest. Juniors Adrian Ellis and Maurice Pulley won the Robotics and Automation Technology competition and senior Trevion Brownlee placed first in the Job Skill Open Class Demonstration.
The Rufus King girls’ track and field team coached by Calvin Matthew took the Division 1 title during the WIAA state track and field meet at Veterans Memorial Stadium at UW-La Crosse. Placing for the Lady Generals were freshman Makayla Jackson, freshman Ameera Fowler, junior Mariah Williams, junior Deja Bates, junior Siarah Jones, and junior Kiersten Walker.

The Lady Generals weren’t the only MPS track and field athletes to place in the state track meet. Morse•Marshall High School senior Bryant Brown took home the state title in the 100-meter dash. He also placed second in the 200-meter dash. Rufus King senior Tavian Stewart placed fourth in the long jump. Riverside University High School junior Aaron Johnson placed seventh in the 400-meter dash.

The MPS Recreation Department was the 3rd place winner in the WaterStone Bank 95th Anniversary video contest! As a result of this outstanding finish, we will be receiving a $10,000 award to be used to support our Youth Program Fund! Brian Hoffer was instrumental in bringing the contest to our attention and creating the wonderful video that put us in a position to win! There were over 100 original entries and the fact that we placed 3rd is to be commended. I am confident we will put these funds directly into the hands of deserving youth who will greatly benefit from the invaluable opportunities we provide to Experience Life! Stay tuned for details on plans to roll out the award money!

The MPS Class of 2016 has earned a record-breaking $47.8 million in scholarships, shattering the $39.3 million record set by the Class of 2015. The total will continue to grow as more scholarships are awarded. Scholarships are especially critical given that more than 80% of MPS students are considered economically disadvantaged. This is the fourth straight year MPS graduates have set a new scholarship record. This year’s total is nearly triple the $17 million earned by the Class of 2012. Growing scholarships and better preparing all students for success in college, career and life is critical to MPS’ eight Strategic Objectives, which include Rethinking High Schools. The district has already grown the number of high school students taking college-level Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses by 25% over the past two years.

**Events/Programs**

At Auer Avenue Elementary School, MPS in partnership with Scholastic and United Way, announced the **My Very Own Library** — a literacy initiative dedicated to putting books into the hands of children in need, will provide Milwaukee Public Schools students with four free books to encourage students to build their own home libraries and take the leap into reading this summer. Thanks to this partnership, 34,000 books are going to students in ten MPS schools.
First Lady Michelle Obama announced that Milwaukee Public Schools is joining the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities signature program, Turnaround Arts. Four MPS schools — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Lancaster, William T. Sherman Multicultural Arts, and Roosevelt Creative Arts Middle School — will kick off the 2016–17 school year as four of only 68 schools selected as Turnaround Arts schools in the nation. The MPS schools are the only schools in the state of Wisconsin receiving Turnaround Arts intensive arts education resources and integration as a strategy to close the achievement gap through a highly-competitive application process.

Pulaski High School is one step closer to becoming the eighth MPS school to offer rigorous, college-preparatory International Baccalaureate (IB) programming. The International Baccalaureate Organization has announced that the school has earned candidate status for the IB Middle Years Programme, which is offered to students in ninth and tenth grade. Many Pulaski High School staff have already received IB training and more will experience that this summer. The school’s IB application comes as Pulaski High School is partnering with Carmen School of Science and Technology to improve academic achievement, school environment and teaching and administrative practices. Carmen, which operates two MPS charter schools, will open its new Carmen High School of Science and Technology – Southeast Campus inside the Pulaski building in the fall, bringing two great schools together on one campus.

A groundbreaking event was held for an addition to the high-performing Maryland Avenue Montessori School. This expansion is part of MPS’ Regional Development Plan, which is increasing access to strong programs that are proven to improve student outcomes. Maryland Avenue, a K3–8 school, was rated “Exceeds Expectations” on its most recent state of Wisconsin report card. Maryland students outperformed both the state average and the nearest suburban district in English Language Arts proficiency on the latest state exam. Enrollment at Maryland Avenue has grown from 373 students in 2011–12 to 400 students in the current 2015–16 school year. The addition is scheduled to be open in time for the 2017–18 school year, allowing the school ultimately serve about 500 students in coming years.