



Reason

#426

12/2013



Weighted Student Formula Yearbook

Milwaukee

by Katie Furtick & Lisa Snell

Milwaukee Public School District

Program Name: Weighted Student Funding

Implementation: 2001

Program Type: District-Wide

Legal Authorization: School Board

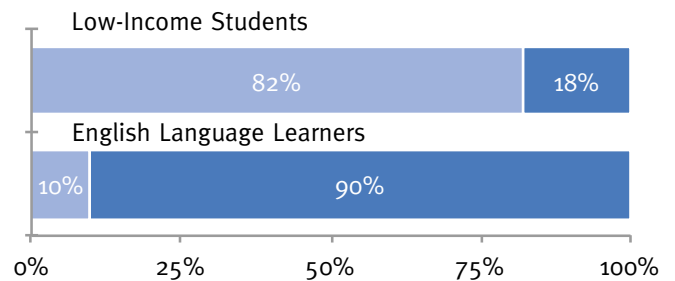
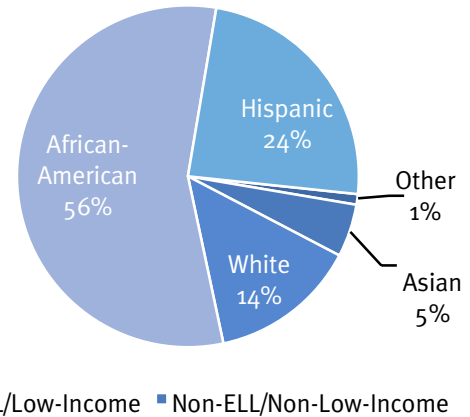
Overall Grade: D

Category	Grade	Rank*
Overall Grade **	D	13
Principal Autonomy	F	13
School Empowerment Benchmarks	C	12
2011 Proficiency Rates	F	14
Proficiency Rate Improvement	B-	7
Expected Proficiency vs. Actual	F	15
Expected Proficiency Improvement	D	13
2011 Graduation Rates	C	6
2011 Achievement Gaps	B-	7
Achievement Gap Improvement	B	5
Achievement Gap Closures:		
■ <i>Internal District</i>	C+	8
■ <i>Internal District vs. Internal State</i>	F	13
■ <i>External Achievement Gaps</i>	B-	5

* Tied with Denver Public Schools for "2011 Graduation Rates." Tied with Minneapolis Public Schools for "External Achievement Gaps." Tied with Cincinnati City Public Schools, Oakland Unified School District, and San Francisco Unified School District for "School Empowerment Benchmarks."

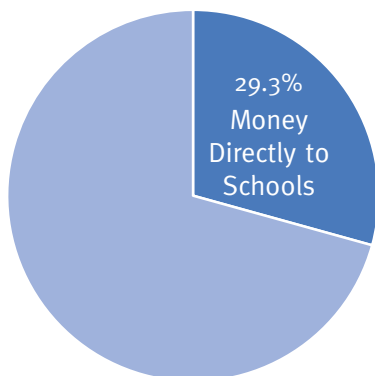
** Overall grades and ranks may not equal the average of individual grades and ranks because categories are weighted differently to reflect their importance.

Demographics



Source: MPS FY 2013 Budget Overview

2012–2013 Principal Autonomy



Source: MPS FY 2013 Budget Overview

School Empowerment Benchmarks

School budgets based on students not staffing	Yes
Charge schools actual versus average salaries	No
School choice and open enrollment policies	Yes
Principal autonomy over budgets	Yes
Principal autonomy over hiring	No
Principal training and school capacity building	Yes
Published transparent school-level budgets	Yes
Published transparent school-level outcomes	Yes
Explicit accountability goals	Yes
Collective bargaining relief, flat contracts, etc.	No

MPS Met 7 out of 10 School Empowerment Benchmarks

1. Overview of Milwaukee's Weighted Student Formula Program

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) enrolled 80,098 students for the 2011–2012 school year. The demographic mix is 56 percent African-American, 24 percent Hispanic, 14 percent White and 5 percent Asian.¹ In the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) district, 10 percent of students are English language learners and 82 percent qualify for free and reduced-price lunches.² In 2012, 37 percent of publicly funded Milwaukee students were taught by non-MPS teachers in a variety of public, private and charter schools.

Milwaukee's public schools moved to decentralize school funding in 2001. At the start of the MPS weighted student funding program only a small percentage of the "School Operations Fund" remained centralized, mostly to pay expenses unrelated to individual MPS schools or district-level external obligations, such as special education services to non-MPS pupils and debt service. All remaining funding was allocated to schools. Schools were required to use part of their allocations to purchase certain mandatory central services (called "chargebacks") and could select other optional central services (called "buybacks"). These chargebacks and buybacks, along with the portion of school operations that was not decentralized, provided the revenue that funded central service activities. Schools' direct expenses, plus the optional services chosen (buybacks), represented over 71 percent of FY 2001 school-level budgets, leaving 29 percent of school spending directed by central operations. (In FY 2000, those figures were 60 percent and 40 percent, respectively.)³

Since FY 2012, Milwaukee Public Schools has been moving to once again centralize many school-level services, arguing that there is uneven distribution of services from one campus to another.



2. How Does Milwaukee's Student-Based Budgeting Process Work?

In Milwaukee separate amounts are calculated for pupils at each school "level" (high, middle, K-8 and elementary). Per-pupil allocations are also based on weighting the cost of serving different types of students. These weights are then multiplied by a per-pupil dollar amount and by each school's pertinent budgeted pupil full-time equivalent (FTE) student figure to arrive at an allocation for each category.

Each elementary pupil FTE is assigned a base weight of 1.00 and a relative weight by grade level. In FY14, the dollar allocation per 1.0 elementary pupil is \$3,520.44. Bilingual pupils are weighted at .059 of the base per-pupil amount to provide additional funding for them at each school.

Grade-level weights for Milwaukee Public School's student funding formula are shown in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Milwaukee Public Schools' Fiscal Year 2014 Student Funding Formula

	Base	K–8 th	6 th –8 th	9 th –12 th
 Base Allocation	\$3,520.44	\$155.6	\$207.7	\$640.0
	1.00	0.0442	0.0590	0.1818
 English Language Learners	\$207.7			
	0.059			

More recently, Milwaukee is moving toward a more centralized budgeting system, reducing the amount of funding over which the principal has discretion. In the FY12 and FY13 budgets, several expenditure categories were centralized. These areas include:

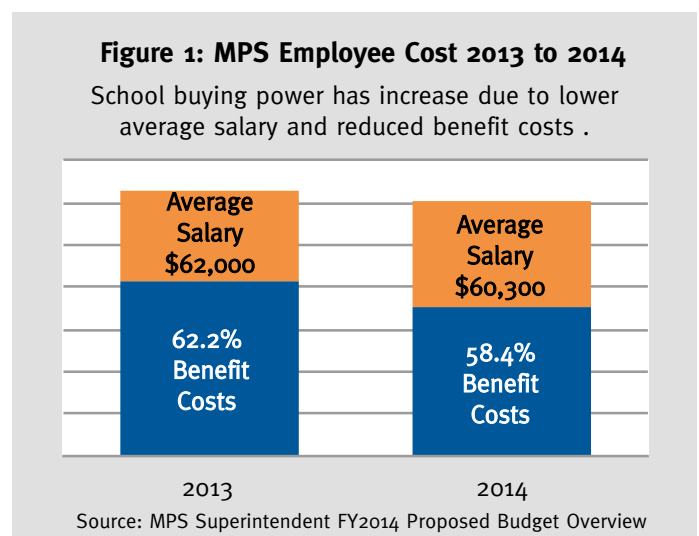
- All costs associated with special education in a school;
- A minimum of .2 FTE for art, music or physical education teacher;
- All substitute teacher costs for any teacher who reported a non-professional development absence in the substitute teacher system;
- The salaries for all safety aides that are assigned to schools;
- All costs associated with the school's telephone system;
- All building services and educational maintenance costs except for repairs resulting from internal vandalism;
- Processing of all contracts;
- Armored car services, and
- A minimum of 0.2 FTE of guidance counselors for every K–8, middle and high school.

FY14 continues the process for traditional and district-run charter schools of moving some costs to a more centralized control process. In the FY14 budget, the following additional costs will be centralized:

- All school administrators and secretary positions;
- School bookkeeping costs, and
- A minimum additional 0.2 FTE of a music, art, physical education teacher and/or librarian for every elementary and K–8 school.

Even though Milwaukee has centralized more services to schools, principals actually have more “buying power” because of Governor Scott Walker’s collective bargaining reforms through ACT 10, which discontinued the requirements that districts have to negotiate with the union for employee benefits, helping Milwaukee schools to reduce their employee costs. In Milwaukee the average teacher salary in FY14 decreased by 4 percent from \$62,800 to \$60,300, largely due to retirements of higher paid teachers. More significantly, because of collective bargaining relief from benefit negotiation, the district reduced the fringe benefit rate on all salaries from 66.2 percent to 58.4 percent in FY14. The result is a total decreased cost of \$8,869 per teacher including benefits, shown in Figure 1.

Therefore, even with a smaller per-pupil allocation going to schools, the district added 104 more new full-time employees in FY14 than it had in FY13, and these increases occurred through benefit savings and lower average salary in the district.⁴



3. How Much Autonomy Do Milwaukee Public Schools Enjoy?

There are two ways to view school-level autonomy. First, autonomy at the school site can be evaluated by budget discretion—what proportion of funds is sent to the schools versus retained at the district level? Second, one can evaluate by planning discretion—how much control over staffing and programmatic offerings do principals have?

The letter grade given to school districts in the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook* indicating the level of autonomy over school budgets is based on the percentage of yearly operating funds that are allocated to the school level. The higher the percentage of operating funds allocated to the school level, the greater budget autonomy the principal enjoys.⁵

The district's trend of moving school costs categories back to central office control has resulted in less per-pupil allocations going directly to schools. Milwaukee public schools received only 29.3 percent of funds through student-based budgeting allocations in FY 2013. This is a smaller level of budget autonomy relative to other school districts highlighted in the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*, giving MPS an "F" in principal autonomy.

Regarding autonomy over staffing positions, in Milwaukee human resources and the central office still handle most teaching assignments. In many cases, teachers are placed without mutual consent and school principals do not have discretion over school-level staff.

4. How Does Milwaukee Public Schools Support Principals?

Milwaukee Public Schools has implemented a comprehensive Leadership Development Model that revolves around three constructs: support and supervision, early identification and skill development programs, and embedded professional development and leadership training.⁶ Each principal or school leader receives support and supervision through the Office of School Administration or through the Office of the Chief Innovation Officer. In addition, a number of programs currently in place provide principals and school leaders a continuum of professional development and training opportunities based on their experience and skill level.

Within the Office of School Administration, schools receive support and supervision through the work of the Regional Executive Specialist and the Regional Leadership Team. Regional Leadership Teams focus on three important areas: curriculum and instruction, school operations and special education services. It is the responsibility of the Regional Executive Specialist to ensure that schools receive targeted interventions and support as needed through the work of their team members. The Regional Leadership Teams create a stronger interface between district accountability and the schools, and are accountable for improved school performance. Each region is further supported with an Academic Support Team, a Parent and Community Support Team, and a Technical Support Team with representatives from nearly every department at the Central Services.

In addition, the budget and finance office has created a set of online tools for school-level budgeting, and during the budget development process principals can attend drop-in support sessions that are designed to assist school leaders in completing their online budget documents. The Office of Finance and the Office of School Administration staff are available to provide technical assistance on a drop-in basis.

5. The Site-Based Management of Milwaukee’s Public Schools

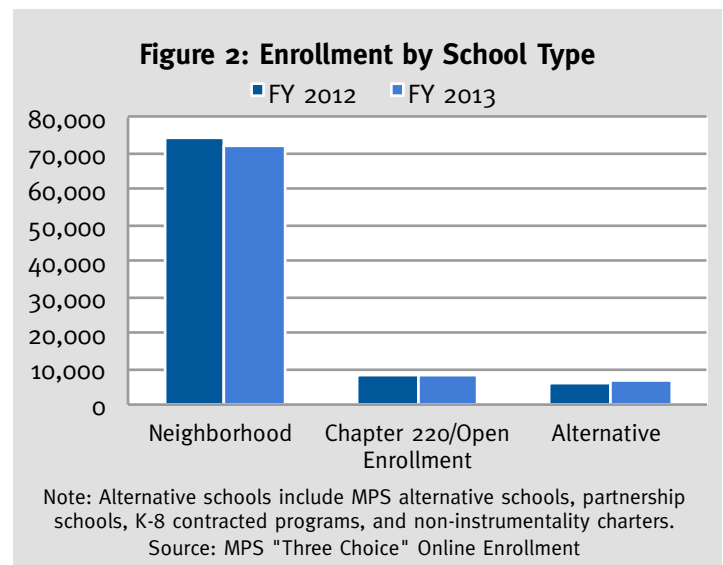
In Milwaukee every school has a school governance council that enables parents, school staff, students and community members to work together in facilitating quality educational plans for continuous improvement of student achievement.⁷

The purpose of a school governance council is to provide a forum for parents, teachers, community members, students and principals to work together in providing continued analysis and improvement of public school policies, curriculum, educational plan goals and general student well-being. The council is also a clearinghouse for information collected from outside organizations, including student groups, parent-teacher groups, teacher associations, etc. The council's decision-making authority is advisory with respect to all duties, powers and responsibilities, with the sole exception of the council's authority and responsibility to submit a cover letter with its school's annual budget and the school's annual educational plan.

The council participates in the development of the annual school educational plan and the annual school budget. The council has the authority and responsibility to submit an accompanying cover letter when its school submits its annual educational plan and annual school budget to the superintendent. The cover letter will bear the signatures of each council member, thereby indicating the council's participation in the development of both documents.

6. The School Choice Component of Milwaukee’s Weighted Student Formula Program

Milwaukee has a “Three-Choice Enrollment” process for families who are new to MPS or those who are selecting a new school. Families apply directly to MPS with a listing of their three top schooling preferences. Milwaukee maintains an online catalog that allows families to find the right program for their children by location, by grade level, and by specialty or program.⁸ Each school’s page contains information about the specific curriculum and programs, specialty courses, start/end times, before/after school programs, clubs, sports and a photo collage. The district has also created an online enrollment form that is easy to use. If a school receives more applications than it has seats, a random selection process will take place that gives all who applied during the Three-Choice process an equal opportunity. After the Three-Choice period ends, enrollment and placement continue on a first-come, first-served basis. Figure 2 shows MPS enrollment by school type in FY 2012 and FY 2013.



7. Initiatives to Increase School-Level Accountability in Milwaukee

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) maintains school report cards as a way of measuring overall performance of individual public schools in the state based upon new, higher standards that measure college and career readiness. Created as a part of Wisconsin’s application for a waiver from the federal law known as No Child Left Behind, these new school report cards replace the previous Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) accountability measure.

In response to the new state accountability report cards, MPS has developed a district-wide plan for continuous improvement that offers a continuum of support and intervention to schools based on their individual performance.⁹ The supports range from monthly principal meetings to intensive school-level support from math and literacy coaches. In addition, the district has developed a “Comprehensive Literacy Plan” and a “Comprehensive Math and Science Plan” to increase achievement in these areas.

8. Performance Outcomes in Milwaukee Public Schools

While compiling this *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*, Reason Foundation conducted an analysis to determine how the school districts that have adopted a Weighted Student Formula are performing relative to other districts in their state, and relative to each other.

Reason’s analysis grades 10 performance metrics. Scores are determined by comparing the school district in question—in this case Milwaukee—with other school districts in the same state (Wisconsin, in this instance), and sorting them into a decile ranking. Based on the school district’s decile rank within its own state, the analysis then compares it with the other districts studied in this *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*. Finally, this analysis assigns the studied school districts a grade based on how they measure up against one another. This analysis also grades and ranks studied school districts on two other measures: the number of school empowerment benchmarks the district has reached, and the degree of autonomy principals have over school budgets. In determining the grades on these two measures, districts are compared only with the other districts covered in this *Yearbook*. A detailed explanation of the methodology used to determine performance metrics and grading can be found in the methodology section of the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*.

Student proficiency rates, as determined by standardized state tests, and student enrollment data were used to calculate the following:

- 2011 proficiency rates;
- Improvement (average change) in proficiency rates from 2008 to 2011;
- Expected versus actual proficiency rates;
- Improvement in expected proficiency from 2008 to 2011;
- Achievement gap, and
- Each of three achievement gap closure metrics.

Milwaukee Public Schools proficiency rate data were obtained from the Broad Prize for Urban Education 2012 District Data Reports.¹⁰ Elementary and middle school student proficiency rates in reading, mathematics and science derive from Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations results.

The analysis also discusses student achievement including 2012 proficiency rates, but 2012 data were not included because in many school districts the data were not yet available at the time of analysis. Therefore, 2012 student achievement is mentioned, but not compared relative to other school districts in Wisconsin and in the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*.

Graduation rates were collected from Data.gov based on adjusted cohort graduation rates at the school level for school year 2010–11 (most recent data available).¹¹ Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates are calculated by state education agencies in accordance with U.S. Department of Education regulations on ESEA, Title I, published in 2008. Adjusted cohort graduation rates are reported for each school as a whole and for key sub-groups of students.

To find district graduation rates from the available school-level graduation rates, this analysis averaged graduation rates across schools, weighted by the total number of students in each graduation cohort at each school. It also calculated average district graduation rates overall and for three sub-groups (African-American, Hispanic, and low-income students).

The grade given for school empowerment benchmarks is based on 10 benchmarks determined to be best practices within existing weighted student formula programs, and recommendations of other studies on student-based budgeting.

The following sections expand upon each graded category by highlighting areas in which MPS performed exceptionally well relative to other districts in Wisconsin, and to other districts in the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*. This analysis also discusses areas in which Milwaukee Public Schools has fallen behind or could use improvement.

Student Achievement

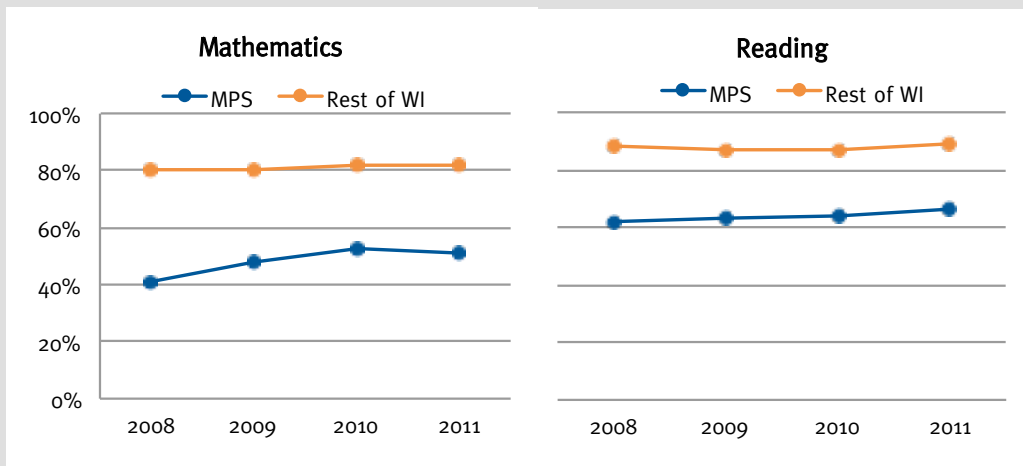
Category	Grade
2011 Proficiency Rates	F
Proficiency Rate Improvement	B-
Expected Proficiency vs. Actual	F
Expected Proficiency Improvement	D
Graduation Rates	C

Milwaukee Public Schools is among the lowest performing school districts in Wisconsin in all subjects and at every school level. Overall and among every sub-group of students, MPS fell among the bottom 10 to 20 percent of school districts for 2011 performance on state standardized tests. More importantly though,

from 2008 to 2011 the district is showing rapid improvement relative to other Wisconsin school districts.

Milwaukee Public Schools is among the top 20 percent of Wisconsin school districts for fastest improvement in mathematics and reading proficiency among middle school students, shown in Figure 3. MPS students are also among the top 40 percent of Wisconsin school districts for fastest improvement in science proficiency among middle school students. High school and middle school students, overall, are also increasing their proficiency rates year to year in mathematics, reading and science—but not quickly relative to other school districts in the state. The rate of proficiency improvement among students in these grade levels is about average compared to improvement in other districts.

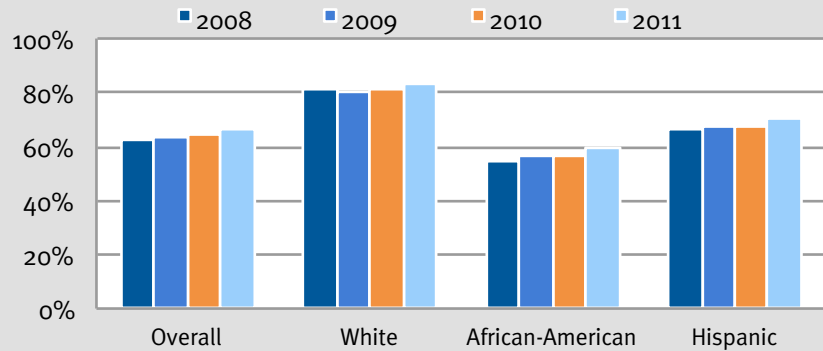
Figure 3: Improvement in Proficiency among Middle School Students



Source: Broad Prize 2012 District Data Reports.

Disaggregated by student subgroup, MPS is the fastest improving school district in mathematics proficiency among low-income middle school students relative to the other *Yearbook* districts discussed. MPS low-income middle school students are improving their proficiency rates more quickly than 70 percent of Wisconsin school districts.

Figure 4: Proficiency Rate Improvement Middle School Reading



Source: Broad Prize 2012 District Data Reports

Hispanic and African-American students at all grade levels, on average, are increasing proficiency each year but at an average to below-average rate relative to other Wisconsin districts.

The district’s Hispanic students are improving proficiency at a pace between the top 40 percent to bottom 40 percent of Wisconsin school districts. And among African-American students, the rate of improvement in proficiency in reading, mathematics and science is between the top 50 to bottom 40 percent of all Wisconsin school districts. MPS non-disadvantaged student groups (non-low-income and White students) are improving proficiency at an average to above-average rate relative to other school districts, which is likely a contributing factor to the district’s overall improvement. Middle school reading proficiency improvement overall and broken down by student group is shown in Figure 4.

Predicted or expected proficiency rates are calculated relative to all other school districts in Wisconsin, controlling for the percentage of low-income students at each grade level. Generally, a large, low-income student body is an indicator of low performance. By controlling for, or taking into account, the percentage of low-income students in each

grade level across school districts this analysis can determine how well a given school district should be performing relative to others in their state.

If the predicted proficiency rate is higher than the actual proficiency rate, then a school district is under-performing. In other words, the school district is not reaching its potential achievement level. If a school district's actual proficiency is above its predicted proficiency, the district is over-performing what is expected given the low-income student population.

Given the percentage of low-income students at each grade level, MPS actual proficiency rates were below expected. MPS is among the lowest ranked districts in the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook* for 2011 expected proficiency in high school mathematics, reading and science. The same is true for middle school mathematics and reading. In both instances, MPS falls in the bottom 10 percent of Wisconsin school districts.

MPS did not fare well in improvement in expected proficiency, meaning that the district did not improve proficiency as quickly as it should have been able compared to the improvement of other Wisconsin school districts.

Milwaukee Public Schools is among the top 40 percent of Wisconsin school districts for 2011 graduation rates among African-American and Hispanic students. Among the overall student population, MPS is among the bottom 10 percent of school districts for the four-year cohort average 2011 graduation rate. However, disaggregated by student sub-group, the district performed well among African-American and Hispanic students.

Achievement Gaps

Category	Grade
2011 Achievement Gaps	B-
Improvement in Achievement Gaps	B
Achievement Gap Closures:	
<i>Internal District</i>	C+
<i>Internal District vs. Internal State</i>	F
<i>External Achievement Gaps</i>	B-

The following three achievement gaps are measured across all grade levels (elementary, middle and high school) and school subjects (reading, mathematics and science):

- African-American versus White student proficiency;
- Hispanic versus White student proficiency, and
- Low-income versus non-low-income student proficiency.

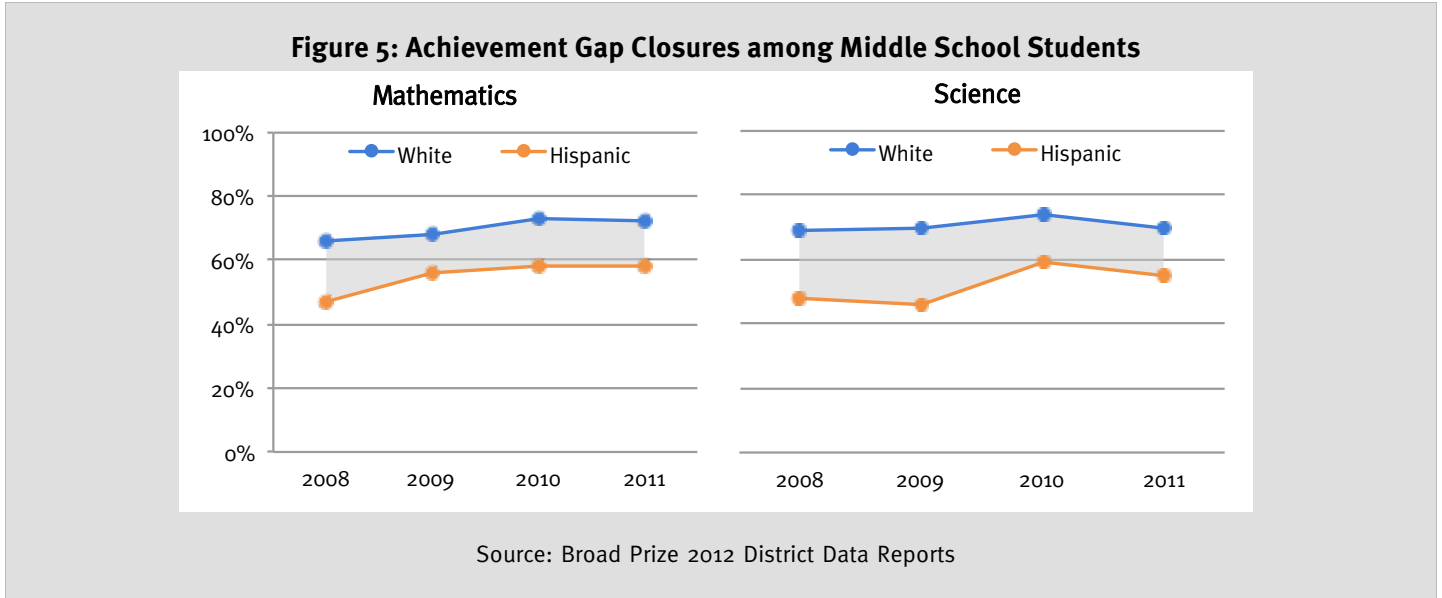
Internal district achievement gaps (IDG) are measured as proficiency gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged student groups within a given district. Because internal district achievement gaps are measured for each district in the state, this analysis can rank relative size of achievement gaps across districts in the state, and assess how quickly those achievement gaps are closing from 2008 to 2011.

An achievement gap is considered to be closing if the disadvantaged student group proficiency rate is increasing faster than the advantaged student group proficiency rate.

Milwaukee Public School District has many relatively small 2011 achievement gaps, but these achievement gaps are small due to both advantaged and disadvantaged students' similarly low performance. In this case, achievement gap improvement is a more important indicator of achievement.

MPS is among the top 50 percent of Wisconsin school districts for fastest closing achievement gap in middle school mathematics and science between African-American and White students. MPS is also among the top half of Wisconsin school districts for fastest closing achievement gaps between Hispanic and White middle school students

in mathematics and science, shown in Figure 5. This means that White, African-American and Hispanic students are improving their proficiency year to year, but African-American and Hispanic middle school students are achieving proficiency at a faster rate.



Milwaukee is also improving achievement gaps in high school mathematics proficiency between low-income and non-low-income students, and between White and Hispanic students. However, while the achievement gap between low-income and non-low-income students is actually closing (low-income students are reaching proficiency faster than non-low-income students) the gap between White and Hispanic students has decreased due to lower proficiency among White students.

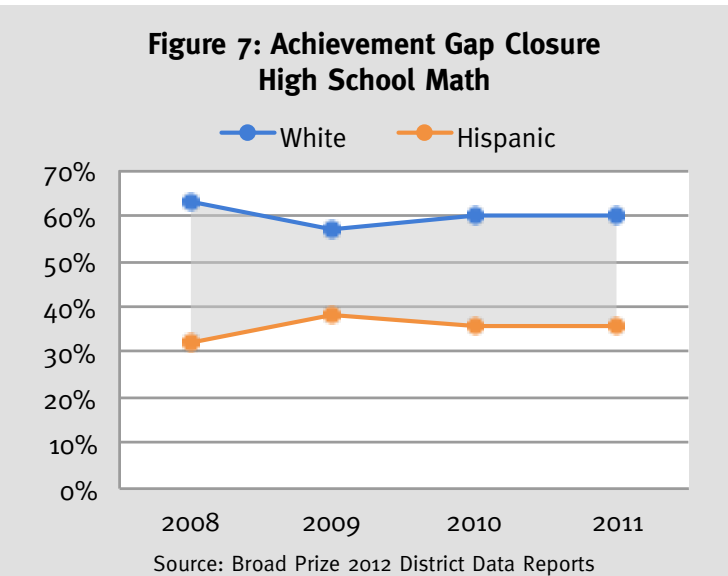
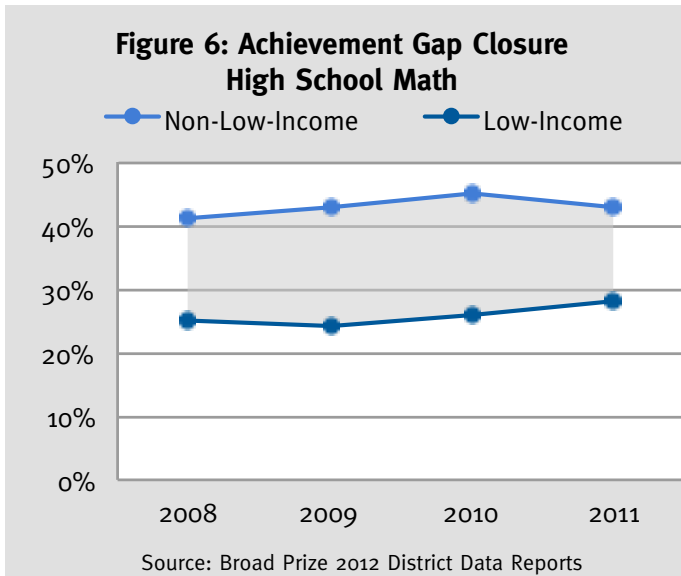


Figure 6 shows achievement gap closure, indicating that both student groups are improving, but the disadvantaged student group is improving at a faster rate. Figure 7 shows improvement in the achievement gap because it has become smaller, but not because of a positive outcome, but rather due to a sizable drop in proficiency among White students in 2009.

In addition to internal district achievement gaps (IDG) discussed above, this analysis also measures internal district versus internal state (ID vs. IS) achievement gaps and external district achievement gaps (EDG).

Internal district achievement gaps (IDG) are measured between student groups within the district. Internal district versus internal state (ID vs. IS) achievement gaps are measured as the district's achievement gap versus the average achievement gap of every other district in Wisconsin (excluding MPS). If a given Milwaukee Public Schools achievement gap is closing faster than that of the rest of the state, the ID vs. IS gap is considered to be closing. Finally, external achievement gaps (EDG) are measured by the difference between the district's disadvantaged student group proficiency rate and the advantaged student group average proficiency rate of all other districts in the state. External achievement gaps are considered to be closing if the district disadvantaged group proficiency rate is increasing faster than the state advantaged group. Table 2 shows which achievement gaps MPS is closing, and which achievement gaps are not closing, given the available data.

Table 2: All Achievement Gap Closures

Achievement Gap	School Level	Subject	IDG	ID vs. IS	EDG
African-American vs. White	Elementary	Math	X	X	√
Hispanic vs. White	Elementary	Math	√	X	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Elementary	Math	X	X	√
African-American vs. White	Elementary	Reading	X	X	X
Hispanic vs. White	Elementary	Reading	X	X	X
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Elementary	Reading	X	X	X
African-American vs. White	Elementary	Science	X	X	X
Hispanic vs. White	Elementary	Science	X	X	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Elementary	Science	X	X	X
African-American vs. White	Middle School	Math	√	X	√
Hispanic vs. White	Middle School	Math	√	X	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Middle School	Math	X	X	√
African-American vs. White	Middle School	Reading	√	X	√
Hispanic vs. White	Middle School	Reading	X	X	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Middle School	Reading	X	X	√
African-American vs. White	Middle School	Science	√	X	√
Hispanic vs. White	Middle School	Science	√	√	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	Middle School	Science	X	X	√
African-American vs. White	High School	Math	X	X	√
Hispanic vs. White	High School	Math	X	X	√
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	High School	Math	√	X	X
African-American vs. White	High School	Reading	X	X	X
Hispanic vs. White	High School	Reading	X	X	X
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	High School	Reading	X	X	X
African-American vs. White	High School	Science	X	X	√
Hispanic vs. White	High School	Science	X	X	X
Low-income vs. Non-low-income	High School	Science	X	X	X
Total Gaps Closing out of Total Available:			7/27	1/27	16/27

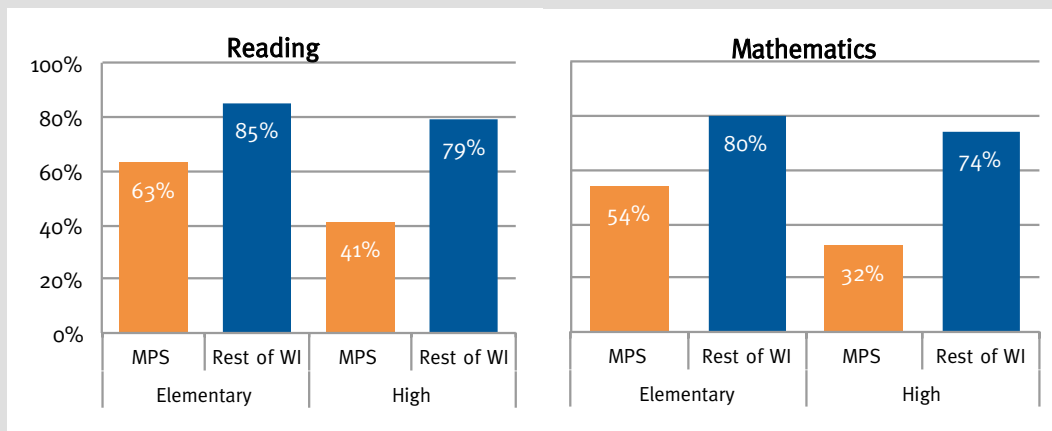
Milwaukee Public Schools is not closing many internal district achievement gaps relative to other *Yearbook* school districts. Because the district is low-performing relative to other Wisconsin districts, not only do disadvantaged students need to improve proficiency, but so do advantaged student groups.

MPS is also failing at closing the internal state versus internal district achievement gap. In all but one measured achievement gap, on average other Milwaukee school districts are closing achievement gaps at a faster rate than MPS. The district is showing the best performance in closing external achievement gaps, meaning that on average MPS disadvantaged students are increasing proficiency rates at a faster pace than the “rest of state” average advantaged student group proficiency.

Areas for Improvement

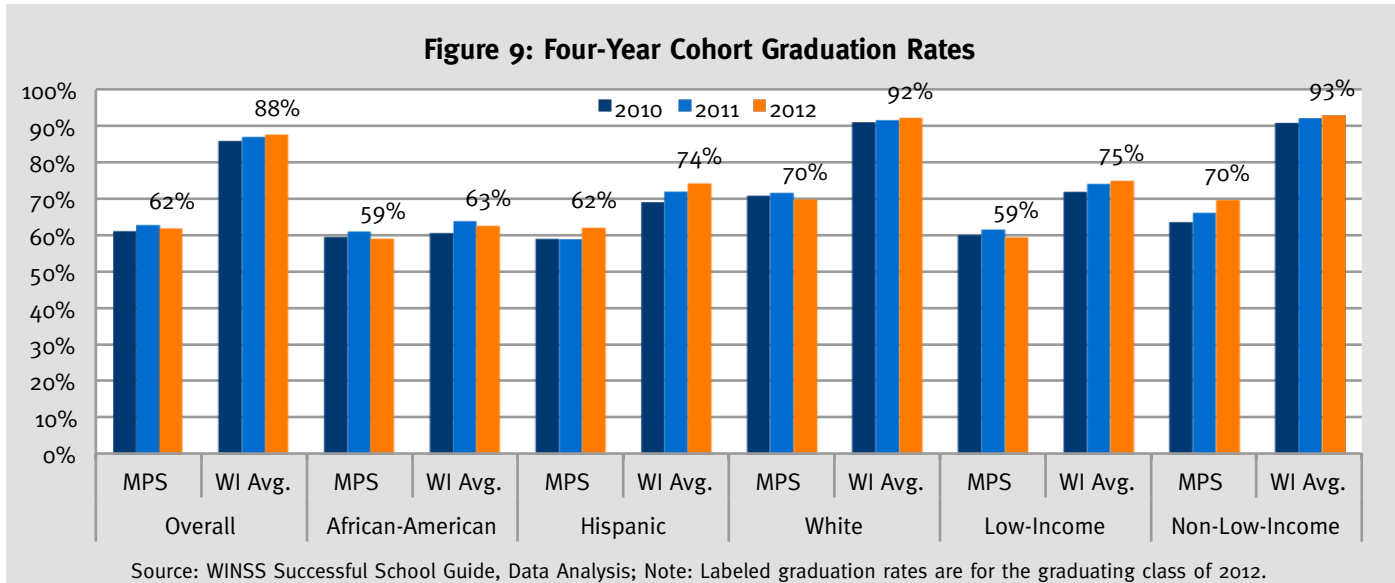
Milwaukee Public Schools had the lowest 2011 proficiency rate ranking in 30 out of 36 categories relative to other districts in the *Yearbook*. Overall and across all student sub-groups, MPS is among the bottom 10 to 20 percent of all Wisconsin school districts for 2011 proficiency rates in reading, mathematics and science. In particular, MPS has very low reading proficiency rates, and improvement in reading proficiency has been below-average relative to other Wisconsin school districts. Also, although the district is making gains among middle school students, MPS elementary and high school students are not catching up to their peers in other districts nearly as quickly. Elementary and high school students’ reading and mathematics proficiency rates compared to the “rest of state average” are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: 2011 Proficiency Rates – MPS vs. Rest of WI Average



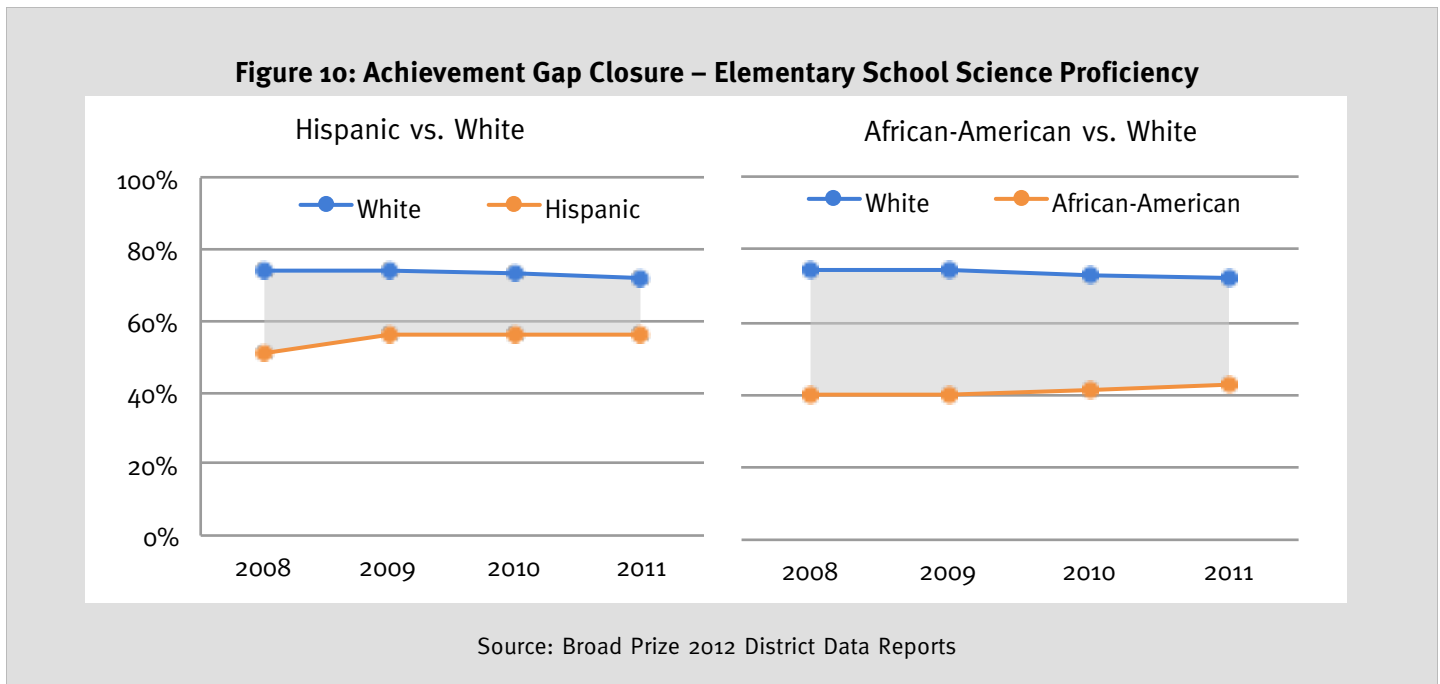
Source: Broad Prize 2012 District Data Reports

In 2011, four-year cohort graduation rates overall and among low-income students were below average relative to other Wisconsin school districts. Among African-American students, Milwaukee’s 2011 graduations rate is just shy of the state average. Also, the district’s Hispanic students saw an increase of 3 percent from 2012 to 2011, but even with the increase Hispanic students’ graduation rates are below average. The group that has seen the largest increase in graduation rates from 2010 to 2012 is non-low-income students. Figure 9 shows four-year cohort graduation rates from 2010 to 2012 for Milwaukee and the Wisconsin state average by student group.



As previously mentioned, although MPS shows improvement in some achievement gaps, this doesn't necessarily mean that they are closing. Achievement gap closures are only counted if both the advantaged and the disadvantaged student groups are improving proficiency, with the disadvantaged student group improving at a faster rate to catch up with the advantaged student group.

This is the case between African-American and White students' and Hispanic and White students' increase in elementary school science proficiency. Rather than both student groups increasing proficiency each year, White elementary school students are performing worse—not a positive outcome, shown in Figure 10.



Compared to the rest of the state, Milwaukee Public Schools is failing at closing achievement gaps.

School Empowerment Benchmarks

Milwaukee Public Schools met 7 out of 10 school empowerment benchmarks. The three benchmarks that MPS failed to meet are:

- Charging schools actual versus average salaries;
- Principal autonomy over hiring, and
- Collective bargaining relief, flat contracts, etc.

MPS made gains toward collective bargaining relief in 2013 when Governor Scott Walker discontinued the requirements that districts have to

negotiate with union for employee benefits. However, full relief from collective bargaining has yet to be realized. If the district were given full relief from collective bargaining along with principal autonomy over hiring, Milwaukee teachers and administrators would have clear incentives to help their students succeed.

Category	Grade
School Empowerment Benchmarks	C
School budgets based on students not staffing	Yes
Charge schools actual versus average salaries	No
School choice and open enrollment policies	Yes
Principal autonomy over budgets	Yes
Principal autonomy over hiring	No
Principal training and school capacity building	Yes
Published transparent school-level budgets	Yes
Published transparent school-level outcomes	Yes
Explicit accountability goals	Yes
Collective bargaining relief, flat contracts, etc.	No

9. Lessons Learned in Milwaukee

1. In Milwaukee's original implementation of weighted student formula, the idea of "buybacks" and "chargebacks" allowed individual schools to see what services they were paying for from the central office and the value of those services compared with other spending choices. When the central office keeps a larger portion of the operating budget and just pays for a certain level of central services, principals have less discretion over resources and will not realize the cost of these services to the individual school.
2. Milwaukee demonstrates how to manage an online enrollment process that offers parents information about every school in the district and offers a simple and transparent online enrollment process where parents do not have to apply at individual school sites.
3. Milwaukee also demonstrates that with collective bargaining reform, employee costs that increasingly encroach on school operating funds can be reduced and schools can have more "buying power" for school-level staff and resources.

Resources

- Milwaukee Public Schools, *School Budget Overview, FY13 Proposed Budget*.
<http://www.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/server.pt/doc/86757/03+FY13+School+Budget+Overview>.
- Milwaukee Public Schools, FY13 Budget Preparation, Steps and Check-Off, *Budget Check-off Steps - Milwaukee Public Schools*.

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Endnotes

- ¹ Milwaukee Public Schools FY 2013 Proposed Budget, School Budgets Overview
- ² Ibid.
- ³ Milwaukee Public Schools, Superintendent’s Fiscal Year 2006 Proposed Budget Overview, Supt. Proposed Budget—2006.
- ⁴ Milwaukee Public Schools, Superintendent’s Fiscal Year 2014 Proposed Budget Overview, <http://www2.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/FY14/Super-Budget-Overview-14.pdf>.
- ⁵ The methodology used for determining principal autonomy is explained in detail in section 2 of the methodology chapter of the *Weighted Student Formula Yearbook*.
- ⁶ Informational Report and Possible Action on the Milwaukee Public Schools Leadership Development Model, <http://board.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/attachments/e538c662-e5ee-49b7-9432-5d94d17af240.pdf>.
- ⁷ Milwaukee Public Schools, Administrative Policy 9.11, School Governance Councils, August 31, 2013.
- ⁸ Milwaukee Public Schools, “Three Choice” Online Enrollment, <http://www5.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/school/selections>.
- ⁹ Milwaukee Public Schools, District-Wide Plan for Continuous Improvement, 2012–2013.
- ¹⁰ <http://www.broadprize.org/resources/reports2012.html>.
- ¹¹ U.S. Department of Education, EDData, *Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates at the School Level: School Year 2010–11*, <https://explore.data.gov/Education/School-graduation-rates/5vtz-kvrk>, April 17, 2013.