Measuring Up Education

Community-driven accountability in Milwaukee

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Introduction

The recent appointment of a new superintendent, the need for priority-setting in the face of dramatic state budget cuts, and increased national attention on school reform have elevated the performance of the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) to the forefront of local media and civic attention. Consequently, the need for an understandable and commonly agreed-upon set of metrics with which to measure and monitor improvement at MPS is now more important than ever.

In July 2010, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation engaged the Public Policy Forum to research appropriate performance metrics for MPS. Our research questions included: How do other large urban school districts measure progress? What are the pros and cons of using each metric for accountability purposes? Are there best practices in accountability measurements that may be applicable to Milwaukee?

Given the widespread involvement of Milwaukee's philanthropic and business communities in MPS accountability and reform initiatives, we first attempted to identify community-led public school performance measurement projects, as opposed to those arising from school district administrators and staff. We found five examples of districts that have seen significant community involvement in creating a performance measurement project, including one here in Wisconsin. Most of those projects are quite new, so it is difficult to draw conclusions as to the effectiveness of their efforts. However, in Cincinnati, the Strive Together partnership's baseline year is 2005-06 and the project has seen steady improvement on many measures.

We choose to highlight the measures utilized by Cincinnati's Strive Together effort, due to the recent attention this project has received in Milwaukee. Although Cincinnati's school district is much smaller than Milwaukee's, at 33,000 students, the partnership reflects community-driven measurement and includes over 300 organizations as partners. In addition to the indicators collected by the Strive initiative, the school district itself produces a "dashboard" of measures similar to those outlined in this report.

We also examined school performance measurement initiatives created by education policy or education reform organizations. We found several such organizations working at a national level to advocate for performance measurement by school districts. Those initiatives each recommend specific metrics that communities can use to hold their districts accountable, mostly involving academic performance.

Finally, we analyzed the work of several state and local education and civic entities to glean which metrics already are used in Milwaukee to evaluate the success of MPS. We also looked to local efforts that are targeting charter and private schools in order to consider indicators that could be universally applied to all schools in the city.

This research produced a list of 49 specific indicators that are being used to measure school performance nationally or locally, and that might reasonably be used to measure success, progress and/or accountability at MPS. After evaluating the pros, cons and practical

considerations associated with each, we recommend 13 indicators that we believe would constitute a worthwhile basis for measuring and evaluating MPS' academic and fiscal performance going forward.

Whether or not there is general consensus on the use of these 13 indicators, it is hoped that this report can contribute to the ongoing community discussion about accountability at our state's largest public school district. While reasonable people will disagree about the specific strategies needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning at MPS, it would be constructive for community leaders at least to agree on how we will measure whether those strategies are succeeding, and how to ensure accountability if they are not.

Research design and methodology

This report reflects the results of environmental scans of three different groupings of entities that are engaged in accountability-related school reform efforts: national education policy organizations; urban school districts; and Milwaukee-area education and civic organizations. Our goal was to identify performance metrics that are commonly being used both nationally and locally to monitor and assess school performance for possible inclusion in a set of future MPS performance metrics.

At the national level, we searched for educational reform-minded organizations or collaboratives with an emphasis on performance measurement. Our search was guided by our own internal database of education policy organizations and a literature review. We found the focus of performance measurement initiatives among these organizations varies, with some aimed at state-level reform and others at reform at the district level. In addition, some of the organizations or initiatives have a narrow, specific focus on one aspect of K-12 education, while others have a broader focus. We reviewed websites and published documents to capture all instances in which the measurement of a specific aspect of performance is either recommended or, in some cases, in which the organization is actually collecting data. We also included any state-level metrics that could be measured at the district level.

To find comparable national school districts that had undertaken community-led performance measurement initiatives, we searched major news publications with a national perspective on education reform, including Education Week, the New York Times, and the Washington Post, as well as education news consolidator websites. We excluded from our search results districts that differed greatly from MPS in terms of student demographics or urban location. Ultimately, we selected four model school districts from outside Wisconsin: Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit and San Diego. It is important to note that while there were various characteristics associated with the performance measurement efforts of these districts that led us to conclude they were worthy of consideration for this report, their performance measurement practices should not necessarily be considered best practices, as their efforts, for the most part, are too new to be properly evaluated.

In addition, from our previous work for the Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce Association analyzing the performance of the Racine Unified School District (RUSD), we

had considerable information on that district's two-year-old performance measurement initiative, in which the district itself called together community groups to establish a series of grade-level metrics to be monitored over time. Consequently, RUSD is another school district whose efforts were analyzed for this report.

At the local level, we focused first and foremost on the planning documents and requirements currently guiding the district, as those appropriately will receive a larger share of the district's attention than any outside initiative. Those plans include the district improvement plan, which is required under federal law, and the district strategic plan. The strategic plan was created with significant community input under the previous superintendent's administration, and it is assumed to continue to govern the district's policymaking until updated or replaced.

We also focused on local organizations that have a working relationship with MPS, including the teachers union, the City of Milwaukee, and civic groups such as the Greater Milwaukee Committee and the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce. While none of those entities has a specific focus on performance measurement, all have engaged in MPS improvement initiatives that have cited at least a few metrics by which they will judge their own or the district's success.

Finally, because it would be optimal for any MPS performance measurement protocol to allow for comparison to the performance of private and charter schools in the city, we include local efforts to measure performance in those schools, as well. (More specific information on all the organizations included in the scan can be found in Appendix A.) Our final tally of the metrics recommended or collected at the local level is the result of interviews with local education reformers and district personnel, document reviews, and local news coverage.

Potential metrics

Our research yielded nearly 50 different metrics in use locally and around the country to measure school district performance, as shown in **Table 1**. We sort these metrics into three broad categories: descriptive, academic achievement, and fiscal. Of the three categories, academic achievement has the most metrics and receives the most attention. Metrics in the descriptive and fiscal categories are most often used to provide context for the academic achievement measures. Among the descriptive metrics are some items that are not truly within the control of the district (e.g. student demographics), but that research has shown to be linked to district performance. Consequently, school districts often closely monitor those metrics and others in order to make strategic planning decisions.

Table 1: Potential indicators

Indicator	National Organizations 10	Local Organizations 10	Model Districts 5	Method of calculation
Student demographics				
Poverty	6	4	2	% students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch
Race	5	3	2	enrollment by race/ethnicity
English language learners	6	0	1	% ELL students
Special education	4	2	2	% special education students
District characteristics				
Student enrollment	4	3	5	
Enrollment in K3 and K4	3	1	0	% of all 3 and 4 year olds enrolled in K3 and K4
Class size/student-to-faculty ratios	4	3	2	
Student-to-administrator ratio	1	0	2	
Student-to-computer ratio	1	0	2	students per instuctional computer
Community satisfaction	0	1	1	community survey
Community volunteers/partnerships	0	3	4	partnerships with community, number of volunteers from community
Student mobility	2	3	1	number of new students arriving between third Friday in September and last day of school divided by third Friday in September enrollment
Parental involvement	3	1	3	% parents who report attending a PTO meeting or teacher conference, participating in school fundraising, or volunteering/serving on a school committee
School climate surveys/parent satisfaction	4	3	2	school and parent surveys
Teachers				
Attendance	2	1	2	
Novice teachers	2	0	0	first-year teachers
Highly qualified teachers	4	3	1	% teachers highly qualified under NCLB, % teachers given waivers or emergency certificates
Experience level	2	1	0	teacher certification exam scores, years experience, advanced degree
Teacher turnover	1	2	1	% teachers who did not teach in the same school the following school year
Nationally certified teachers	3	2	2	% teachers nationally certified
Academics				
Schools making AYP	4	1	1	defined by state under federal NCLB law
Achievement test scores	6	7	5	% students scoring "proficient" or "advanced" on WKCE
Racial achievement gap	3	3	1	usually the black-white test score gap
School level acheivement gap	0	3	0	

Indicator	National Organizations 10	Local Organizations 10	Model Districts 5	Method of calculation
Course success	2	0	1	grades, course failures, credit accumulation
Retention	3	1	1	% students that have ever been retained in a grade during their school career
High school completion	7	8	5	% first time 9th graders in a given year who graduate from high school within 4, 5, or 6 years
Drop out rate	3	2	1	% students enrolled in high school in October but 1 year later had not completed high schooland were not enrolled in school.
Participation in vocational/technical programs	1	0	2	% of 16 to 24 year-olds who participated in adult education activities: work-related courses, personal interest courses, part-time degree or diploma programs, other activities
College preparation				
AP course enrollment and pass rates	8	1	3	% students enrolled in AP courses, % scoring 3 or higher on an AP exam
Participation in college-going activities	1	0	1	participation in college-prep course, completing FAFSA application
Average SAT scores and participation	5	1	0	
Average ACT scores and participation	5	2	2	
College matriculation	7	1	2	% graduates who enroll in college within 15 months after graduation
College retention	5	0	1	first-time college freshmen returning sophomore year
College remediation	4	1	1	% freshmen receiving remedial coursework
Delinquency				
School safety/persistently dangerous schools	5	2	4	schools meeting NCLB definition of persistently dangerous
Disciplinary incidents	4	1	2	% students suspended or expelled
Attendance/truancy	6	6	4	daily attendance rate, habitual truancy rate (missing 15 or more days)
Finances				
Expenditures (total per student)	5	1	0	
Revenues (total per student)	2	0	1	
Accuracy of budget projections	0	0	1	
Accuracy of enrollment projections	0	0	1	
Percent of budget spent on instruction	0	1	2	
Percent of school capacity used	0	1	1	% schools that routinely use common areas for instructional purposes to accommodate an overflow of students
Facility age/maintence needs	2	1	2	building audit or principal satisfaction with maintenance services

Descriptive Metrics

We classify the descriptive metrics as student demographics, district characteristics, and teacher characteristics.

Student demographics

Although measurements regarding student demographics are not within a school district's control, most of the national school improvement initiatives include such measures to provide context for other metrics. Considerable research has found that certain student and family characteristics are highly correlated with student performance, including the educational attainment of the student's mother, the number of books in the home, family income, whether the primary language spoken at home is English, and race. Of these, the most readily available information pertains to student race.

In addition, family income can be approximated by whether or not the student is eligible for free or reduced price lunch (at higher grade levels these data tend to undercount low-income students as fewer eat hot lunch at school), while the percentage of students with limited English proficiency is another available measure. The percentage of a district's students who receive special education services also is a contextual measure that can inform not only student performance outcomes, but also per-pupil costs.

Benefits and limitations

Because these metrics are beyond the control of the district, and because creating ~~"t~~arget" goals for them is inappropriate, they are not good performance indicators. However, for the purpose of providing context for those indicators that do measure performance, they provide valuable information about the conditions under which teaching and learning are taking place.

National Usage

While these indicators are referenced by all national reform efforts, the individual school districts analyzed tend not to emphasize these contextual metrics, with the exception of Racine.

The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) does not require these characteristics to be measured for their own sake, but does require improved achievement among each of these subgroups of students.

Strive Cincinnati

For big-picture context, Strive measures quality-of-life indicators in the community, such as income, educational attainment, and unemployment. The project also collects district-level

demographic measures including enrollment, race, socio-economic status, and disability status.

Local Usage

MPS includes measures of student characteristics in its NCLB-required district improvement plan, but not in its "Working Together Achieving More" strategic plan. The Children's Research Center at UW-Madison – which evaluates City of Milwaukee charter schools – also measures these characteristics, as do two organizations working mostly with private schools (PAVE and Schools that Can Milwaukee).

Recommendation

Because these descriptive, contextual data are readily available for public schools and can easily be accessed in order to complement and inform performance analysis, it is recommended that they NOT be included among MPS performance indicators. However, presenting these measures alongside performance indicators would provide context.

District characteristics

District characteristics also include some contextual information, such as parental involvement and student mobility, which can help inform student performance outcomes similarly to student demographics. However, district characteristic measures arguably are more within the control of the district. District characteristics also include measures of outside support and perception of the district, such as community satisfaction and the number of community volunteers and/or partnerships. The following provides brief analysis of specific metrics linked to district characteristics.

Benefits and limitations

- Student enrollment—Can be used to measure the district's overall health, as a growing student enrollment means the district is attractive to students and is generating more per-pupil state aid. However, if enrollment grows faster than planned, or if the growth comes mainly from high-cost students, than growing enrollment could indicate the district is or will soon be experiencing financial struggles.

- Enrollment in K3 and K4—Used to measure the district's commitment to early childhood education, which is a means of attacking the student achievement gap by preparing very young children for school. However, for K3 in particular, enrollment also may reflect students in need of early intervention. Consequently, growth in this grade could portend higher costs in later grades if students' needs are not adequately met prior to K5.

- Student mobility rate—Measures the percentage of students who start the school year in a particular school, but transfer to another school (either inside or outside the district) prior to the start of the subsequent school year. High student mobility has been found to have negative effects on student achievement. Student mobility is closely correlated with family income, and lower-income families move households more frequently. Student mobility also is higher when families do not have to attend their neighborhood school, but can choose from among schools. MPS is a district in which both types of mobility are high. While mobility due to household moves is out of the district's control, because MPS does not require students to attend their neighborhood school, the district could attempt to influence overall mobility by providing mobile families with an incentive to stay in their original school.

- Class size/student-teacher ratios—Class size measures the number of children in a classroom, which has been found to correlate with student achievement, but which can vary widely from school to school across the district. In addition, particularly for MPS, some schools utilize a team teacher approach that puts two teachers in a classroom with more students than normal, which means that without more information about the room, the class size figure could be quite misleading. Student-teacher ratios are used as a proxy for class size. Again, in the instance of team teaching, the measure can be misleading, although in this case it would tend to skew the perception the other way.

- Student-administrator/student-staff ratios—Serves as a proxy measure for the amount of district expense that occurs outside the classroom, as it reflects the number of non-teachers per pupil. For a district like MPS, in which many students have needs that cannot be met in the classroom and that require use of social workers, nurses, and guidance counselors, this may not be an appropriate measure, as these expenses are directly benefitting students even if they are not incurred in the classroom. The same is true for enrichment and extra-curricular staff.

- Student-computer ratio—Not a traditional measure of district performance, but gaining importance as the need for better science and math education becomes paramount. Reflects a district's investment in technology, which is particularly important for low-income students who may not have access to computers outside school. However, without a companion measure of teachers who are able to utilize computers in the classroom regularly, the student-computer ratio may be misleading, as it could reflect nothing more than fancy equipment gathering dust.

- Parental involvement—There is not consensus as to the best measure of parental involvement. Common measures include: percentage of parents attending parent-teacher conferences; PTO participation rates; percentage of parents volunteering during the school year; and number of parents running for/serving on school governance councils. Parental involvement has been found to be positively correlated with student achievement. Because of the many methods of measuring parental involvement, it may be difficult to consistently compare across districts. In addition, different schools within a district may emphasize different ways for parents to become involved, meaning one measure may not reflect involvement district-wide.

- Parental satisfaction/school climate surveys—While a positive school climate may be expected to correspond to higher achievement, measuring school climate is very difficult and is usually done via student, staff, and parent surveys. Parent satisfaction, also measured via survey, has not been found to have a consistent relation to student performance; indeed, parents often are very satisfied despite their schools' poor performance. Surveys are not particularly good performance measures since they are subjective by nature.

- Community satisfaction—Measured by surveying the general public residing in the district, it has the same limitations as other surveys in terms of serving as an objective indicator. In addition, it does not have a demonstrated relationship to student achievement.

- Community volunteers/partnerships—Used to measure the community's support for the district, these metrics can reveal a district earning greater support or one losing the community's confidence.

National Usage

Of the 10 district characteristics evaluated, only class size/student-teacher ratios and parent satisfaction are measured by at least four of the national reform initiatives. Parent involvement and student enrollment are each measured by three of the national groups.

Meanwhile, student enrollment is the only district characteristic measured by all five of the individual districts analyzed. Community volunteers/partnerships are measured by four of the five. Each of the other eight metrics is measured by at least two districts.

Among the district characteristic metrics, only student-teacher ratios and student-staff ratios are required to be measured by school districts under federal law.

Strive Cincinnati

Strive pays particular attention to parental involvement, both at home and at school. In addition, community partnerships are valued, not just in terms of businesses and organizations being involved in the schools, but as a means of attracting the students to community service and civic engagement. Student mobility is also tracked. Strive does not track pre-Kindergarten enrollment, but measures school readiness via state reading assessments made of entering Kindergartners.

Local Usage

District characteristics measured by three local reform efforts are: parental satisfaction/school climate; student enrollment; class size/student-teacher ratios; community volunteers/partnerships; and student mobility rate.

The MPS strategic plan includes measures of enrollment and class size, while the NCLB-required district improvement plan includes none of these 10 district characteristics.

Recommendation

Those district characteristic measures that have demonstrated relationships with student achievement are most worthy of the community's attention. Of those cited above, the metrics that meet that criterion are class size/student-faculty ratio; parental involvement; and enrollment in K3 and K4. The research tying small class size and high quality early childhood education to student achievement gains is particularly robust. While the quality of the teacher and the quality of the K3 and K4 environment are the real influencing factors, **class size and K3 and K4 enrollment** can serve as good proxy measures for the district's commitment to improving the classroom environment and opportunities for early childhood education, and those are the metrics that should be measured.

Parental involvement, while also having a connection to student achievement, is much more difficult to measure systematically, reliably, and in a manner that allows for comparison to other districts. At this time, it is not recommended that a parental involvement metric be included in a performance measurement mechanism for MPS.

Teacher Characteristics

Teacher characteristics – while also descriptive – are determined by district policy to a greater extent than most of the other metrics cited in this section of the report. For example, district hiring, promotion, tenure, and compensation policies all impact teacher characteristics. The following provides brief analysis of specific metrics linked to teacher characteristics.

Benefits and limitations

- Teacher experience—Measures the average number of years of experience held by a district's teaching staff. This metric usually is assumed to be a proxy for teacher quality, and it informs other measures, such as instructional costs, as more experienced teachers usually demand a higher salary. A very high average experience could point to an imminent wave of retirements among the teaching staff, while a very low average experience might indicate a high rate of teacher turnover.

- Percentage of novice teachers—The percentage of the teaching staff that is new to the job is another measure of teaching experience. In a district with a significant turnover rate, or one that has recently experienced a high number of retirements, there may be many more novice teachers. Novice teachers usually are assumed to lack the experience necessary to have a strong positive impact on student learning. There are many,

however, who cite Teach for America and other data to argue that novice teachers may have more time, energy, and/or determination.

- Teacher turnover—This is typically measured by the number of teachers leaving the staff annually. High teacher turnover could reflect several retirements in a given year, but is usually influenced more by teachers leaving the district for other opportunities. There will be a relationship between teacher turnover and teacher experience, as districts in which many teachers have yet to earn tenure likely will experience higher turnover. High turnover is generally regarded as detrimental to student learning because of the instability it causes within schools.

- Percentage of teachers highly qualified—NCLB requires districts to track the percentage of teachers who are ~~"h~~highly qualified" to teach in their assigned classrooms, which is defined as being licensed by the state, holding a bachelor's degree, and having demonstrated competence in their teaching area. Meanwhile, ~~"d~~demonstrated competence" is commonly defined as having certification in the field and/or grade level in which the teacher is assigned. Districts also might measure the percentage of their staff that is teaching with an emergency or provisional credential. While teacher quality is an important factor in student achievement, there is considerable disagreement as to whether these metrics accurately reflect teacher quality. In addition, MPS has been found to be out of compliance with this regulation in the past, though it has argued that in some specialty areas, the most qualified teacher may not have the appropriate certification (e.g. a teacher with a degree or professional experience in a technical trade, but who holds a general teaching certificate).

- Percentage of teachers with national certification—The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has a rigorous and competitive teacher certification process. Research has shown that students taught by nationally certified teachers make higher gains on achievement tests than other students. In addition, teachers who opt for national certification have been shown to significantly strengthen their teaching practice during the certification process. Very few teachers apply for and earn this certification, however.

- Teacher attendance rate—Measures the number of daily absences among the teaching staff. A low teacher attendance rate can be costly for the district in terms of substitute teachers, but it also may indicate management problems. A high teacher attendance rate shows staff stability and is less likely to negatively impact classroom operations and student learning.

National Usage

NCLB requires districts to measure and monitor the percentage of highly qualified teachers (as defined by state law), and half of the national reform initiatives also utilize this metric. Three of the national organizations measure the number of district teachers with national certification. The other metrics cited above are used by either two or one national group.

National certification is monitored by about half of the model districts. The model districts do not measure teacher experience, either by the percentage of novice teachers or by average years of experience. The other metrics are each used by one district.

Strive Cincinnati

Strive does not measure teacher characteristics.

Local Usage

The local reform efforts and plans, like the national efforts and the model districts, give little attention to most teacher characteristics. The MPS district improvement plan and the MPS strategic plan both monitor the percentage of teachers highly qualified, as does the MTEA/WEAC Milwaukee Opportunity Plan. As would be expected, the MTEA/WEAC plan employs the greatest usage of teacher metrics. The City of Milwaukee's Innovation and Improvement Council also is interested in teacher metrics, though none of the efforts focused on charter or private schools in Milwaukee uses these teacher metrics.

Recommendation

Because the No Child Left Behind Act requires districts to count their **highly-qualified teachers**, that metric should be the baseline proxy metric for teacher quality. However, the district should present that data by school in order to reveal any disparities in teacher quality across the district. In addition, counting the number of **nationally certified teachers** would raise the profile of that type of certification and perhaps would encourage more teachers to obtain national certification.

Academic Performance Metrics

Academic performance metrics appropriately are the focus of most performance measurement efforts across the country, whether initiated by districts or by community groups, as the main objective of these efforts is improved student performance. We categorize these metrics into three classifications: academic achievement, college preparation, and delinquency.

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is the focus of most performance measurement initiatives. In fact, thanks to the NCLB, there is a nearly universal effort to track similar types of measures. NCLB also has sharpened the focus on achievement gaps between different demographic categories of students. The following provides brief analysis of specific metrics linked to academic achievement.

Benefits and limitations

- Percentage of schools making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB—Because this is a measure all districts are required to track under federal law, it is easy to compare across districts. However, the comparisons are not true apple-to-apple comparisons when made across states, as each state defines AYP for itself. In addition, because making AYP depends on showing progress in each student demographic group, more diverse schools or districts have more chances to miss making AYP than do homogeneous districts.

- Percentage of students participating in state testing—The NCLB requires all students to participate in state testing, which makes this an easy data point to collect. However, now that the NCLB has been in effect for nearly a decade, there would seem to be little room for improvement on this measure, as most districts are likely to have figured out how to maximize student participation.

- Achievement test scores—The foundation of NCLB requirements is student performance on state standardized achievement tests. Children are tested on reading and math in 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades, and on reading, math, science, social studies, and language arts in 4th, 8th, and 10th grades. These annual scores provide a snapshot of student performance. Comparing these snapshots from year to year can provide a sense of whether a district is making consistent and uniform progress. However, some districts also collect achievement data in such a way as to measure individual student growth over time, usually called value-added data. This type of test score is much more helpful in tracking how much progress is made by individual students and how that progress compares to their peers.

- Achievement gaps—The achievement test data described above, whether snapshot or value-added data, can highlight whether certain groups of students are performing better or worse than other groups of students. Most districts are concerned about gaps by race, gender, English proficiency, and special needs status. Racial achievement gaps often are the largest and most persistent of these gaps.

- School-level achievement gaps—There also is concern about achievement gaps at the school level, particularly when a district is perceived to have a persistent or growing gap between its highest- and lowest-performing schools. If this gap mirrors that between the schools with the highest and lowest minority student enrollment, or the highest and lowest spending per pupil, then the achievement gap may reflect inequalities within the district.

- Course success—The pass rate by course for high school students is relatively subjective and, therefore, is not a good measure to use in isolation. However, a high rate of course success coupled with low standardized test scores may indicate course work or grading practices that are not rigorous enough. If the opposite is the case (i.e. low course success but high scores on state tests), a district may have more rigorous standards than

the state. In addition, analyzing course success in conjunction with demographic data may reveal adverse grading practices for certain groups of students. The Wisconsin longitudinal data system soon will include course completion information, which should improve the reliability of this data, as it will be reported by every district in the state for every student.

- Retention rates—Indicates the percentage of students who are not promoted to the next grade level each year. Like course success, this is a somewhat subjective measure and is best used in conjunction with other data. Of particular concern is whether minority boys are retained at disproportionate rates.

- High school completion rates—Graduation from high school is the focus of many of the performance measurement initiatives considered for this report. Like most other states, Wisconsin now reports "completion" rates, which track individual students over the four years of high school to more accurately count those who graduate, as opposed to those who drop-out, move, or are retained. Completion rates thus provide a very accurate measure of student success in high school.

- Drop-out rate—Complements completion rate data by focusing on the subset of students who do not complete high school within four years because they have dropped out. Used in conjunction with demographic and achievement data, drop-out data may help districts predict the student groups most at-risk of not completing high school.

- Participation in vocational and technical programs—These metrics are used to measure a district's efforts to serve those students who are not likely to go to college, but who need skills to join the workforce immediately after high school. A low participation rate may indicate too few offerings in this area, or it may indicate a successful college-prep curriculum reaching most students.

National Usage

With very few exceptions, high school completion rates and state achievement test scores are the priority measures for the national performance measurement efforts. The drop-out rate, the racial achievement gap, and the percentage of schools making AYP also receive focus. The NCLB requires districts to measure most of these items and also requires data to be disaggregated by student demographic group.

The five model school districts each monitor graduation rate and state test score data. Racine also monitors the racial achievement gap and participation in vocational and technical programs. Value-added measures are a goal in all five districts, yet their capacity to collect this data varies. Racine has been using the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) exam to create student-level growth data, but has not yet developed the type of comprehensive data base that would allow it to analyze student growth in conjunction with other non-academic measures such as teacher experience or school climate.

Strive Cincinnati

Strive tracks the following student achievement measures: reading and math scores in 4th and 8th grades, high school completion, drop-out rates, grade progression/retention, and achievement in 21st century skills development. It is unclear the extent to which Strive monitors the racial achievement gap.

Local Usage

Graduation rates are a focus of nearly all the local school improvement efforts, as are state test scores. Three of the local groups also focus on racial achievement gaps, and three on the gap between the highest- and lowest-performing schools. The district strategic plan and the district improvement plan both include these four items, while the improvement plan also covers the drop-out rate and the percent of schools not making AYP.

Recommendation

High school completion rates and **state achievement test scores** should be the focus of any performance measurement initiative for MPS. It is not enough, however, to just track these aggregate data. For MPS and other large urban districts, the real performance issue concerns under-performing minority and/or low-income students. These rates should therefore be tracked by student demographic, so that achievement gaps become the focus. Improvement should be measured not just with annual snapshot data but, to the extent possible, with value-added data. MPS has several years of value-added state test data and has been working closely with the Value-Added Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This analysis should become the backbone of the district's performance measure efforts, as it provides the greatest opportunity for insight into the most successful types of students, classroom settings, teaching methods, or any of several other factors. The district can utilize these insights to make changes, try new tactics, and/or abandon unsuccessful efforts.

One caution, however, is that the state test will be replaced with a new test in the next year or two. The state believes it will be able to design a new test that can be reliably compared to the old test, so that longitudinal data will remain useful. Whether that will be the case, however, remains to be seen.

College Preparation

Student achievement in the K-12 grades is important in and of itself, but preparing students to be successful in college is perhaps more important in terms of workforce development and economic growth. A new Talent Dividend Initiative developed by regional civic and economic development groups, for example, is striving to increase the number of four-year

college degree-holders in Milwaukee by one percentage point over the next three years. The initiative will renew attention on the successful preparation of MPS students for the rigors of college and may lead to greater outside assistance to MPS' efforts to increase college matriculation rates. The following provides brief analysis of specific metrics linked to college preparation.

Benefits and limitations

- AP course enrollment and passage rates—A barometer of the potential of a district's students to attend and succeed in college is performance on Advanced Placement (AP) exams. Students bound for college are encouraged to enroll in high school AP classes, covering subjects such as foreign language, physical science, social science, and math. AP classes offer accelerated learning, increased opportunities for college preparation, and college credit with a high score on the exam. AP exam passage rates indicate, therefore, how well high school students perform in college-level classes. This metric does have limitations, however, as a measure of student preparation for college. Availability of AP classes varies by school, as these courses are quite costly for schools to offer, impacting the number of opportunities for students to take AP courses and the AP exam. AP course and exam data currently are collected in the state longitudinal data system.

- Participation in college-going activities—Pre-college programs aim to increase college access among low-income, minority, and first-generation college applicants, by offering programming to high school students regarding the application, selection, and financial aid processes. Several of these programs are available in the Milwaukee metro area, but their enrollments are relatively small due to limited resources. Other measures of college-going activities might include enrollment in ACT or SAT prep courses, completion of federal financial aid applications, or surveys of post-graduation plans.

- Percentage of students taking ACT/SAT and average scores—Students who are interested in attending college need to demonstrate potential suitability for higher education by performing well on college entrance exams. The ACT and SAT exams test high school students in English, math, reading, and science. One of these two exams is required for most college applications. The percentage of students taking college entrance exams will reflect most of the students planning to attend college, although the cost of the exams may be prohibitive for some students. MPS has recently implemented a new policy of administering the exam free-of-charge to all high school juniors. While the scores on these exams are good predictors of college success (explain why so many colleges use them in making admission decisions), the importance of a good score has caused the proliferation of costly exam prep courses. Students who cannot afford to take these prep courses may be at a competitive disadvantage. ACT data currently are collected in the state longitudinal data system.

- College matriculation—The percentage of high school graduates who enroll in college within a year of graduation is a good measure of college preparation. The accuracy of this data may be limited, however, if the district does not have the necessary resources to

maintain a database of alumni. Post-secondary data eventually will be added to the state's longitudinal student data system (which currently spans only grades K-12), which will make college matriculation much easier to measure and track. College matriculation will be included in the longitudinal data system through an agreement with the National Student Clearinghouse, which has student-level data from more than 3,300 public and private colleges and universities across the country.

- College retention—The college retention rate usually is defined as the percentage of college freshmen who return for their sophomore year. This is both a measure of college readiness and a reflection of the college's efforts to help students who are struggling academically or financially. Because of the college's influence on this metric, it is not a good measure for use in holding a district accountable, though this also is a measure that eventually will be included in the state longitudinal data system.

- College remediation—A metric reflecting the percentage of high school graduates who must enroll in remedial courses after starting college may be the best measure of college readiness because it is determined by the college itself. These rates, however, would not include those students who opt to drop out of college rather than pay tuition for remedial courses. Consequently, the metric actually may undercount the number of students unprepared for college-level work. Like college matriculation and retention, remediation also will soon become part of the state longitudinal data system.

National Usage

The national reform efforts have a heavy emphasis on college preparation. Most of the national efforts include some type of measure of AP exam opportunity and/or success. Most also monitor the percentage of high school graduates that enroll in college. Each of the other indicators is utilized by four or five of the national groups, except participation in college-going activities, which is cited only by the Education Trust.

Except for Cincinnati, with a goal of every student enrolling in college, the model districts place far less emphasis on college preparation in their performance measurement plans, although over half of them do measure AP opportunities and success.

Strive Cincinnati

Strive tracks college-going activities, ACT composite scores, college enrollment, college retention, college graduation, and types of degrees conferred.

Local Usage

The local education reform initiatives also tend not to include many college preparation measures. The district improvement plan does not monitor any of these metrics. The strategic plan looks at two items: AP course enrollment/pass rates and enrollment in

remedial courses in college. Two local groups monitor ACT/SAT scores and one monitors college matriculation.

Recommendation

MPS recently has made a commitment to ensure all district juniors are able to take the ACT exam. Interestingly, in the first year of that commitment, the average score on the exam increased, despite the much larger number of test takers. Monitoring the **average ACT score** would provide the district with added rationale to continue to provide the ACT exam at no cost to district students and would further encourage efforts in MPS to ensure students will be able to perform well on the exam.

Making college more accessible in this small way could increase the percentage of MPS graduates enrolling in college, which is a metric that also is recommended for inclusion in an MPS performance metric initiative. While **college matriculation** data are not currently collected or reported in a systematic way, the anticipated expansion of the state longitudinal data system to include post-secondary institutions data will address that issue.

Student Engagement

Safety, discipline, and attendance metrics measure students' engagement in their education. The following provides brief analysis of specific metrics linked to student engagement.

Benefits and limitations

- Attendance and truancy rates—Attendance is highly correlated with student performance and also is a measure required by NCLB. Habitual truancy, which is defined by the percentage of students missing a specified number of days per semester, also is correlated with student performance. High habitual truancy also can reflect disciplinary problems in a school.

- Disciplinary incidents—Includes suspension and/or expulsion rates, both of which reflect disciplinary problems at the school level. These rates can be difficult to compare across schools and districts because of their subjective nature, as behavior that rises to the level of expulsion in one school may only merit suspension in another.

- School safety—NCLB requires districts to report the number of schools deemed ~~"p~~persistently dangerous." A Wisconsin school is persistently dangerous if more than 5% of its students are suspended for weapons incidents, or more than 1% of students are expelled for assault, weapons or dangerous behavior for three straight years. This definition has resulted in no schools in Wisconsin being classified as persistently dangerous in most years.

National usage

All three student engagement metrics receive frequent usage by national reform efforts and by the model school districts. Attendance rates are nearly universally measured and school safety is commonly measured because of NCLB requirements.

Strive Cincinnati

Strive measures student attendance, behavioral incidents in school, school safety incidences and perception, and engagement in quality extracurricular activities.

Local usage

In contrast to the frequent use nationally, only student attendance receives much attention among the local education reform groups. Attendance is included in both the district improvement plan and the district strategic plan, while four other local efforts also measure attendance rates. School safety and student discipline are not utilized nearly as often, although they are included in the strategic plan.

Recommendation

Student attendance is a foundational underpinning of student performance and, therefore, should be closely monitored as part of a performance measurement project.

Although students should not be expected to attend school when they do not feel safe, because the state definition of persistently dangerous schools has no teeth, it is not a worthwhile metric.

Fiscal Measures

Performance measurement initiatives, on the whole, tend not to include fiscal performance metrics. However, like district and student characteristics, these measures can provide important contextual information when analyzed in conjunction with academic performance measures. The following provides brief analysis of specific metrics linked to fiscal performance.

Benefits and limitations

- Total expenditures and total revenue per student—These metrics provide a useful mechanism for individual districts to compare costs and revenues with other districts.

Also, when tracked over time and compared to inflation, these metrics can reveal unreasonable cost increases.

- Accuracy of budget and enrollment projections—Provides contextual information when the district is in poor fiscal condition. If the projections on which planning and budgeting are based tend to be inaccurate, there may be methodological reasons or there may be forces outside the district acting in unpredictable ways to influence enrollment, costs and/or revenues.

- Percentage of budget spent on instruction—Allows comparison of administrative and instructional costs. This is particularly important in large districts, which tend to be top-heavy in administrators. It is typically assumed that taxpayers will be generally supportive of cost increases if they can be sure the money is spent in the classroom, as opposed to overhead.

- Percentage of school capacity used—This measure, in conjunction with enrollment trends and predictions, can provide warning of a district in which facility costs may become too much of a burden (empty schools) or in which new facilities are needed (overcrowded schools). Overcrowded schools and classrooms may be related to poor student performance.

- Facility age or maintenance needs—Provides another mechanism for tracking facility costs and their potential effect on the overall budget. In addition, these data provide information on the health, cleanliness, and safety of the school buildings in which children are expected to be able to learn.

National usage

Because these types of fiscal indicators usually are not included in school district performance measurement projects, few are used by the national education reform organizations. Surprisingly, none of the national groups monitor the percentage of the district's budget spent on instruction, although five monitor total expenditures per student. Two monitor revenues, and two monitor facility age and maintenance needs.

Among the model school districts, only Detroit and Cincinnati's performance monitoring projects do not include fiscal or facility metrics.

Strive Cincinnati

Strive does not measure fiscal indicators.

Local usage

The MPS strategic plan monitors facility age and maintenance needs, expenditures per student, and the percentage of the budget spent on instruction. None of the other local plans or initiatives includes fiscal measures.

Recommendation

The districts themselves seem to understand that student achievement and fiscal health both are important to the district's long-term outcomes. Despite the lack of attention paid to these indicators by the various national and local reform efforts, these types of metrics should be monitored as part of a comprehensive performance measurement initiative. We recommend that a new MPS performance measurement initiative include the items used in the current MPS strategic plan: **facility maintenance needs, total expenditures per student,** and **the percentage of the budget spent on instruction.**

Conclusion

This report recommends a set of 13 metrics for a community-led performance measurement initiative aimed at assessing the progress of the Milwaukee Public Schools. Collectively, these metrics provide pertinent information on academic achievement, as well as contextual information about the district and its finances. For the most part, the recommended metrics already receive some level of attention within the district as part of strategic and improvement plans currently governing MPS policy and decision-making.

It is important to note that, when possible, these metrics should be disaggregated by student demographic group in order to monitor disparities among students. Similarly, tracking each measure at the school level will reveal any disparities between schools.

The availability, comparability, and reliability of the data behind each metric vary by metric, but each currently is collected by MPS, if not by all districts in the state. Comparability with districts in other states varies considerably by metric.

The following summarizes the recommended metrics and briefly explains their applicability to MPS:

Descriptive metrics

- Enrollment in K3 and K4—can be used as a measure of the district's commitment to closing the achievement gap through high quality early childhood education. This data is readily available at the school and district level for every district in the state.

- Class size—monitoring class sizes, which have been linked to student performance and discipline, will be particularly important in the wake of reductions in the district's participation in the state's class-size reduction program. This data is available at the school and district level.

- Percentage of highly qualified teachers—tracking this metric will ensure the district is in compliance with state and federal laws governing teacher licensure, and will help monitor any disparities in teacher quality across schools. Tracking this data also may help identify any gaps in the state regulations governing teacher certification. Teacher qualification data is available at the school and district level for every district in the state. Similar data also is available for districts in other states, although each state has its own definition of ~~"h~~highly qualified."

- Percentage of nationally certified teachers—emphasis on this metric may encourage more MPS teachers to obtain national certification, which has been shown to correlate with improved student performance. This data is available from the state teachers union for every district in the state and from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Academic achievement metrics

- Achievement test scores—measuring student achievement on state tests by tracking individual student growth over time will indicate whether students continually improve on exams as they progress through the grades. MPS has been collecting this type of value-added state exam data for years, and has recently moved to implement the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) exam in reading, which also provides student growth data. Value-added state exam data is available from the district itself. Not all districts in the state collect such data currently, but the Value-Added Research Center at UW Madison soon will create a statewide database. The imminent change in the state exam calls into question whether long-term trend lines will be disrupted. MAP data also would be available from the district. Many other districts also utilize MAP exams, and such data would have to be collected individually from each district. However, the MAP exam is used by districts across the country and national averages are available.

- High school completion rates—use of this metric will allow for monitoring of the percentage of high school students graduating on time, as well as the percentage dropping out of school prior to graduation. This data is available for all schools and districts in the state. High school completion rates are now comparable with data from districts in other states.

- Racial achievement gap—monitoring disparities in student achievement by race will continue to be an imperative for MPS in light of its student demographics. The racial achievement gap is present in many of the recommended metrics, which is why each metric should be monitored by student demographic group.

- ACT participation and scores—these metrics will measure student preparedness for college entrance. MPS is now providing the ACT exam to all high school juniors at no cost, allowing the district to gauge the preparedness of all students, as opposed only to those who can afford to take an admissions exam. This data is available for each school and district in the country.

- College matriculation—will allow the community to measure the district's success in producing graduates who can gain admission to and enroll in college. This data soon will be available for all schools and districts in the state. Until such time, it is available from each district. Availability in other states varies.

- Student attendance—this measure provides a means for monitoring the district's success in engaging students and their families in education. This data is available for every school and district in the state. Similar data also is available for districts in other states.

Fiscal metrics

- Total expenditures per pupil—allows for monitoring of the district's total costs over time as compared to other districts. This data is available for every district in the country. Comparisons with other Wisconsin districts are valid, though the ability to compare with districts elsewhere varies.

- Percentage of budget spent on instruction—use of this measure will provide a mechanism for tracking the balance between administrative and instructional costs. This data is available for every district in the state. Availability varies for other states.

- Facility age/maintenance needs—these measures can provide warning of the need for major capital investments, while also providing insight on environmental conditions in the classroom. Some data is available for each district from the state, although the reliability is uncertain. Comparable data for districts in other states likely is not available.

Appendix A: National and local organizations surveyed

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Education Commission of the States
Congressionally approved in 1965 as an interstate education compact, the Education Commission of the States facilitates collaboration among members and other entities and provides research and analysis for the creation of effective policies in public education.

Center for Public Education
A 2006 initiative of the National School Boards Association and the National School Boards Foundation, the Center aims to objectively inform the public about the successes and challenges of public education. With the goal of improving student achievement, the Center provides research, data, and analysis on various educational issues and brings forward information on lessons being learned in the field.

National Education Association Foundation
The Foundation is a public charity largely supported by voluntary contributions from the National Education Association union membership. Funds are invested in projects that improve teaching and student achievement. To date, more than $9 million has been invested by the Foundation for its Closing the Achievement Gaps Initiative. Through this initiative, awards have been granted to Hamilton County, Tennessee; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Seattle, Washington; Columbus, Ohio; Springfield, Massachusetts; and Durham, North Carolina.

National Center for Education Statistics
NCES is a federal agency within the Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences. NCES is the main federal entity responsible for collecting and analyzing data in the area of education. NCES develops major datasets comprising standardized data collected from most every school district and college in the country. These datasets are used in their own research reports and frequently relied upon by other research and school improvement efforts. NCES aims to track the condition of education nationally to better inform policy makers, educators, and the public.

The Education Trust
The Education Trust has a stated focus on student interests in particular and their needs at all levels of education. Attention is largely centered on closing opportunity and achievement gaps of low-income and minority students and their future outcomes. The Trust uses data analysis and lessons learned in the field to assist, debate, and advocate for various school improvement efforts on the state and national level.

Achieve
Achieve is a bi-partisan, non-profit organization established in 1996 for the promotion of education reform. The priority of this organization is to increase the attention given to academic standards and high school graduation requirements to increase college and career readiness. Achieve has established benchmarks that indicate what students should know at

each grade level from kindergarten through high school to better align student learning to college and career demands.

Education Week
Education Week is a national publication established in 1981 that discusses a broad array of issues in K-12 education. This publication is published by Editorial Projects in Education (EPE), an independent, nonprofit publisher that aims to bring attention to various issues facing schools nationally. Major annual reports on K-12 education conducted by Education Week include *Quality Counts, Diplomas Count*, and *Technology Counts*.

Common Core State Standards
This is a collaborative initiative created in 2009 to formulate and put forward a common set of standards that guide what knowledge students should acquire throughout their K-12 education for success in college and the workforce. This initiative is led by states through the coordination of the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Standards are established using both national and global evidenced-based practices, broad collaboration, and public feedback.

Alliance for Excellent Education
A non-partisan research and advocacy organization founded in 1999 that works to create a national consensus and policy agenda for increasing performance in high schools so that students graduate prepared for post-secondary education, jobs, and productive citizenry. The Alliance disseminates research on promising practices to create informed debate and lobbies federal policy makers to create effective policies and funding. Attention is focused particularly on the most at-risk, low-achieving middle school and high school students.

Data Quality Campaign
The Data Quality Campaign is a collaborative effort made up of over 50 organizations that seeks to increase student achievement through increased development and use of high-quality longitudinal data. The Campaign has begun by encouraging state acceptance and implementation of 10 essential elements that can improve longitudinal data collection and access. These 10 elements assist in creating state data systems that can track a student's progress beyond secondary education, allowing better tracking of factors that may correlate with student outcomes, such as teacher performance and course completion.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Department of Public Instruction (DPI)/ Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (No Child Left Behind) District Report Cards
The Wisconsin School District Performance Report (SDPR) and the federal ESEA Report Card are released every year and provide performance information on each of Wisconsin's K-12 school districts. The SDPR has been part of state statutes since 1991 and includes performance data for state exams, AP exams, and the ACT and additional information such as district attendance rates, program offerings, and district staffing and finances. The ESEA Report Card is required under No Child Left Behind and includes data used to measure

Adequate Yearly Progress. Information gathered includes district and statewide test results, attendance, teacher qualifications data, and graduation rates.

City of Milwaukee/MPS Innovation and Improvement Council
This council was created following an in-depth review of MPS operations that was released in 2009 and is led by the Mayor of Milwaukee and five other appointed members. The goal of this council is to increase student performance and ensure better financial management within the district. The Council aligns with the MPS district's Strategic Plan, DPI's Corrective Action Plan, and other local and national efforts to improve district academic and financial performance and overall accountability.

MTEA/WEAC Milwaukee Opportunity Plan
A collaborative effort put forth by the Wisconsin and Milwaukee teachers union in 2009 with a focus on "Opportunity Centers" that pilot new ways of bettering student performance, innovative ideas that, if proven effective, could be used in other schools in need of improvement. This initiative aims to advance low-cost, systemic changes to better education quality while focusing on structural, programmatic, and leadership changes for schools in need of improvement.

Milwaukee Graduation Project/ America's Promise Alliance
The Milwaukee teachers union began the Milwaukee Graduation Project in 2009 as part of a national effort of America's Promise Alliance, an organization that works to increase graduation rates and prevent dropouts. The Alliance encourages five developmental resources to achieve that goal, which include caring adults, safe places, healthy starts, effective education, and service. Two Milwaukee summits and additional work groups will culminate into the development of a comprehensive community action plan that will help create the five developmental resources indicated by the Alliance. Other partners include the Wisconsin teachers union, Manpower, the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Milwaukee Public Schools, and State Farm Insurance.

Greater Milwaukee Committee/MPS Strategic Plan Working Together Achieving More
This strategic plan was approved by the MPS school board in 2007 and is a collaborative effort that looks to turn Milwaukee into one of the highest-performing school districts in the country. This initiative encourages the use of research-based practices aligned with high academic standards and accountability to ensure continual improvement in student achievement. It was developed with the guidance of the Greater Milwaukee Committee's education committee.

Schools that Can Milwaukee
Schools That Can is a national, non-profit organization made up of a network of high-performing independent, faith-based, charter and district schools that operate in urban, low-income communities. School That Can follow the model that under-performing schools can benefit from the comparative pressure developed from the presence of high-performing schools. Their presence can serve as example, proving and spreading the use of best

practices. The main objective of this organization is to lower the achievement gap seen in low-income communities.

DPI/MPS District Improvement Plan
The district improvement plan is a requirement of districts designated as not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. MPS has not make AYP for over five years and is now a District Identified in Need of Improvement under NCLB. The district improvement plan is aligned with the district strategic plan.

Children's Research Center at the National Center on Crime and Delinquency
The Children's Research Center works with state and local agencies to implement structured decision making systems for child protection. The CRC's educational program monitoring services provide a vehicle for school administrators to identify, quantify, analyze, and report on educational outcomes, both informal and formal standardized testing, using state-of-the-art data collection and reporting methodologies and analysis. Since 1998, the City of Milwaukee has contracted with NCCD/CRC to act as education monitor for the schools chartered by the City. Since 2005, CRC has worked with the Technical Assistance and Leadership Center in Milwaukee, WI to monitor small high schools created as part of a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation initiative.

PAVE
Formed in 1992, PAVE is a non-profit organization that invests in developing and expanding urban, low-income school improvement efforts. PAVE has established a Quality Assessment Process that measures schools in four general benchmark categories to help schools improve, which include ”leadership and governance, financial accountability, infrastructure for academic excellence, and strategic partnerships with families and community organizations.” PAVE concentrates its work on a limited number of schools and has made financial investments through scholarships and school expansion projects.

Partnership for Public Schools in Milwaukee, Inc.
The Partnership is a private, non-profit organization that strives to improve education in MPS. The Partnership was established in 2009 following the independent evaluation it conducted, titled –Toward a Stronger Milwaukee Public Schools” (also known as the McKinsey report) that pointed out the need for serious reform within Milwaukee schools financially and academically. This organization intends to collaborate on developing solutions and will provide objective analysis of proposals for improvement.

MMAC Education Committee
The MMAC’s four goals for education are to increase the number and capacity of high-performing schools; to create a citywide common report card to assess all of the schools; to create a citywide agenda for educational reform; and to form a targeted work force development system based on the needs of key industries. The proposed common report card would include value-added test scores, graduation rates, attendance rates, and teacher performance.

Appendix B: Indicators investigated

Measurements		National Organizations										State Efforts
	Indicator	Education Commission of the States	Center for Public Education *Good Measures for Good Schools*	NEA/Closing Achievement Gaps Initiative	NCES The Condition of Education	Education Trust	Achieve *American Diploma Project*	Ed Week *Quality Counts*/ PEW Charitable Trusts	Council of Chief State School Officers/ National Governors Association Center for Best Practices *Common Core State Standards Initiative*	Alliance for Excellent Education	Data Quality Campaign	DPI/ESEA District Report Card
	Student demographics											
•	% Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (poverty concentration)	●	●	●	●			●			●	
•	% Minority students	●	●	●	●						●	
•	% English-language learners	●	●	●	●			●			●	
•	% Special education students	●	●		●						●	
•	Participation in extra-curricular activities/ after-school activities				●							●
•	Parental involvement	●		●	●							
•	School climate surveys/parent surveys	●			●	●		●				
	District characteristics											
•	Student enrollment		●	●	●						●	
•	Enrollment in K3 and K4		●		●			●				
•	Class size/ student-to-faculty ratios	●	●		●			●				●
•	Student-to-administrator or total staff ratio	●										●
•	Student-to-computer ratio		●									
•	% of school capacity used											
•	Facility age or maintence needs	●						●				
•	Community survey											
•	Community volunteers/ partnerships											
•	Student Mobility Rate	●									●	
	Academics											
•	NCLB, % schools in improvement categories	●	●	●		●						
•	State test scores	●	●		●	●		●			●	●
•	% Student participation in state testing					●						
•	Minority achievement gap			●	●	●						
•	Acheivement gap between high and low-performing schools											
•	Course success									●	●	
•	Retention rates	●			●					●		●
•	Graduation/ completion rates	●	●	●	●	●		●			●	●
•	Drop-out rate	●			●						●	●
•	Vocational/technical programs, % nontraditional participation	●										

Measurements		National Organizations										State Efforts
	Indicator	Education Commission of the States	Center for Public Education *Good Measures for Good Schools*	NEA/Closing Achievement Gaps Initiative	NCES The Condition of Education	Education Trust	Achieve *American Diploma Project*	Ed Week *Quality Counts*/ PEW Charitable Trusts	Council of Chief State School Officers/ National Governors Association Center for Best Practices *Common Core State Standards Initiative*	Alliance for Excellent Education	Data Quality Campaign	DPI/ESEA District Report Card
	College preparation											
•	Availability, enrollment, and completion rates in AP courses and other high level/college-prep courses (ex. Algebra II, Calculus, etc.)	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●
•	Participation in college-going activities (ex. College-prep courses, FAFSA application, etc.)					●						
•	Average SAT scores, % juniors/seniors taking SAT	●	●			●				●	●	
•	Average ACT scores, % juniors/seniors taking ACT	●	●			●				●	●	●
•	College matriculation by the age of 19	●	●		●	●		●		●	●	●
•	First-year retention rates of college students		●		●	●				●	●	
•	Enrollment in remedial courses in college				●	●				●	●	
	Delinquency											
•	School safety (ex. rate of criminal offenses, violent incidences, % "persistently dangerous schools", absences due to fear of safety, etc.)	●	●		●	●				●		
•	Rate of disciplinary incidents (expulsion or suspension incidents) and duration	●	●		●	●						●
•	Attendance/ truancy rate	●	●		●	●				●	●	●
	Teachers											
•	Attendance/ absence rate	●				●						
•	% Novice teachers				●	●						
•	% Highly qualified	●	●		●	●						
•	Experience level	●									●	
•	Teacher retention, turn-over				●							
•	% Nationally certified	●				●					●	
	Finances											
•	Expenditures (total or per student)	●	●		●	●		●				●
•	Revenues (total or per student)		●		●							●
•	Accuracy of budget projections											
•	Accuracy of enrollment projections											
•	% Budget spent on instruction											●
•	Facility age, maintenance needs	●						●				

Appendix B: Indicators investigated

Measurements		Local efforts										Model districts				
	Indicator	City of Milwaukee/MPS Innovation and Improvement Council	MTEA/WEAC Milwaukee Opportunity Plan	Milwaukee Graduation Project/ America's Promise Alliance	Greater Milwaukee Committee/MPS Strategic Plan Working Together Achieving More	Schools that Can Milwaukee	DPI/MPS District Improvement Plan (required under NCLB)	City of Milwaukee Charter Schools/ Children's Research Center at UW	PAVE	Partnership for Public Schools in Milwaukee	MMAC Education Committee	San Diego Unified Schools	Cincinnati	Cleveland	Detroit	Racine
	Student demographics															
•	% Eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (poverty concentration)					●	●	●	●				●			●
•	% Minority students						●	●	●				●			●
•	% English-language learners															●
•	% Special education students						●	●					●			●
•	Participation in extra-curricular activities/ after-school activities												●			●
•	Parental involvement	●										●	●			●
•	School climate surveys/parent surveys		●	●	●									●		●
	District characteristics															
•	Student enrollment				●			●	●			●	●	●	●	●
•	Enrollment in K3 and K4	●														
•	Class size/ student-to-faculty ratios		●	●	●							●	●			●
•	Student-to-administrator or total staff ratio													●		●
•	Student-to-computer ratio											●		●		
•	% of school capacity used								●					●		
•	Facility age or maintence needs				●									●		●
•	Community survey			●												●
•	Community volunteers/ partnerships	●		●					●			●			●	●
•	Student Mobility Rate	●	●						●							
	Academics															
•	NCLB, % schools in improvement categories						●					●				
•	State test scores		●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●
•	% Student participation in state testing															
•	Minority achievement gap		●		●		●									●
•	Acheivement gap between high and low-performing schools	●			●		●									
•	Course success												●			
•	Retention rates			●												
•	Graduation/ completion rates		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●
•	Drop-out rate			●			●						●			
•	Vocational/technical programs, % nontraditional participation												●			●

Measurements		Local efforts										Model districts				
	Indicator	City of Milwaukee/MPS Innovation and Improvement Council	MTEA/WEAC Milwaukee Opportunity Plan	Milwaukee Graduation Project/ America's Promise Alliance	Greater Milwaukee Committee/MPS Strategic Plan Working Together Achieving More	Schools that Can Milwaukee	DPI/MPS District Improvement Plan (required under NCLB)	City of Milwaukee Charter Schools/ Children's Research Center at UW	PAVE	Partnership for Public Schools in Milwaukee	MMAC Education Committee	San Diego Unified Schools	Cincinnati	Cleveland	Detroit	Racine
	College preparation															
•	Availability, enrollment, and completion rates in AP courses and other high level/college-prep courses (ex. Algebra II, Calculus, etc.)				●							●				●
•	Participation in college-going activities (ex. College-prep courses, FAFSA application, etc.)															
•	Average SAT scores, % juniors/seniors taking SAT			●												
•	Average ACT scores, % juniors/seniors taking ACT			●				●					●			●
•	College matriculation by the age of 19					●							●		●	
•	First-year retention rates of college students												●			
•	Enrollment in remedial courses in college				●										●	
	Delinquency															
•	School safety (ex. rate of criminal offenses, violent incidences, % "persistently dangerous schools", absences due to fear of safety, etc.)			●	●							●	●	●		●
•	Rate of disciplinary incidents (expulsion or suspension incidents) and duration				●								●			●
•	Attendance/ truancy rate	●	●	●	●	●	●					●	●	●		●
	Teachers															
•	Attendance/ absence rate		●											●		
•	% Novice teachers															
•	% Highly qualified		●		●		●									●
•	Experience level	●														
•	Teacher retention, turn-over		●		●										●	
•	% Nationally certified	●	●											●		●
	Finances															
•	Expenditures (total or per student)				●											
•	Revenues (total or per student)															●
•	Accuracy of budget projections													●		
•	Accuracy of enrollment projections													●		
•	% Budget spent on instruction				●							●		●		
•	Facility age, maintenance needs															