



The decision to craft state legislation allowing for mayoral leadership of MPS is about one thing only: creating an education system that ensures each child in Milwaukee reaches his or her full potential. Doing so is inextricably linked with growing jobs, reducing crime, and improving our quality of life in Milwaukee.

Unfortunately, the current system leaves many children struggling to meet even basic goals, particularly children of color, who comprise nearly 90% of the more than 85,000 MPS students. Students should graduate from MPS ready to compete in the global economy, but that will not happen as long as we are not even outperforming Mississippi or Alabama.

We have great teachers and tremendous community support. This is not about the failure of any individual, but the failure of the current system to provide the stability and accountability required for success. Our children cannot continue waiting for efforts to tweak this flawed system – we must seek a dramatically different path.

After listening to President Obama's education reform priorities and many conversations with education leaders locally and nationally, Governor Doyle, State Superintendent Evers and I are convinced that a change in governance provides the best opportunity to achieve the success our students deserve. Mayoral governance will allow us to:

- 1) **Attract the best possible superintendent.** Superintendents driven to make significant change need to know that they will have the time and support necessary to implement a coherent strategy for success. I have heard from numerous experts that a governance structure that provides stability and does not require constantly having to negotiate support for each policy initiative is critical.
- 2) **Maximize federal resources necessary to drive reform.** President Obama has made it clear that federal education dollars will be tied to bold reforms linked to academic outcomes. US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has stated clearly that he believes mayoral governance is essential to reform. This is not only true for the \$4 billion in Race to the Top funds, but will likely continue to be true for future federal education dollars.
- 3) **Attract State and Local dollars.** Mayors work closely with the State, private sector and local foundations on various issues and can use that experience to direct more funding into classrooms. I was able to work with legislators to lower the property tax impact of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program by over \$18 million annually.
- 4) **Ensure Stability and Focus.** There have been seven different board presidents in less than a decade. This type of turnover results in new initiatives constantly being introduced, often to be dismissed or never fully implemented. This wastes our teachers' time and talent – without guaranteeing results.
- 5) **Clearly Define Accountability.** Finger-pointing is facilitated by the current system where the board and administration can shift blame for initiatives that do not work. Under a mayoral system, voters know who to hold accountable.
- 6) **Ensure Diversity.** As I have demonstrated with my cabinet selections, it is critical that the appointed board reflect diversity both racially and in expertise.

Governance change alone is not enough. My key priorities will include:

- 1) **Closing the Racial achievement gap.** It is alarming that we are failing our students of color to a greater extent than any other state. We must ensure our educational strategies are based on research that demonstrates success for ALL students, and engage the community on the importance of education. In

New York, the black/white achievement gap narrowed 12.5 percentage points in math and 6.4 points in reading since switching to mayoral governance.

**2) Ensuring Accountability - fiscal and academic.** The McKinsey Report spurred some change in the district's financial management, but much needs to be done to ensure that we get every possible dollar into the classroom. Evidence exists that the district lacks a performance management system to ensure that initiatives are implemented appropriately and fully.

**3) Attracting Quality Teachers.** As the husband of an MPS teacher, I know that teachers are the key to success. I will meet with teachers regularly to ensure we find innovative ways to attract the best. We are working with the Milwaukee Teachers Union on strategies to solicit teacher input.

**4) Responding to parents.** I will ensure that parents have someone to communicate their concerns to who is empowered to respond to their needs.

**5) Replicating what works.** We absolutely must know what initiatives are working in MPS to focus our resources appropriately. There is support to establish an external entity to research and provide feedback to stakeholders on all major MPS initiatives, similar to a model at the University of Chicago.

**Keeping the status quo is the path of least resistance, but it is also the path that is failing our students. The stakes are too high and I am determined to do the right thing for our children and community.**