

Opportunity Schools Partnership Program in Brief

Problem: The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has identified 55 Milwaukee Public Schools that fail to meet expectations which represent 83.3 percent of all failing schools in Wisconsin. The consequences of these failing schools are a significant factor in contributing to Milwaukee's declining economic and social health. The following brief provides a summary of a new governance model to provide new opportunities for Milwaukee Public Schools, parents, students and the community at large.

Solution: The Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program (OSPP) will create a new governance structure in MPS to free students from nonperforming schools.

- OSPP shall be run by a Commissioner for an at will term appointed by the Milwaukee County Executive
- The Commissioner shall operate independently from the MPS Board
- The Commissioner shall receive parallel authority to the Board, but shall be free of all state and local regulations except for safety, health, special education, and non-discrimination laws
- The Commissioner shall have two core tasks:
 - Partnerships: Develop and manage relationships for the effective deployment of wrap around services that are either revenue neutral or generate savings
 - Schools: Develop and manage a portfolio of nonperforming campuses and turn the campuses around either through direct or indirect management

School Incorporation shall occur through a three step process

- DPI must provide a list of all MPS schools that “fail to meet expectations.”
- The Commissioner shall assess the qualitative nature of quantitatively eligible schools:
 - *The commissioner should provide qualitative analysis of the schools to determine what, if any school to incorporate (Qualitative factors shall be defined by the Commissioner, but shall include factors such as school leadership, staff composition, and community interest in pursuing a new approach)*
- Strategic School Partnership Matching
 - The commissioner may directly manage or solicit offers from charter operators and private schools that participate in school choice with outcomes that significantly outperform MPS

Operational Background

- **Funding:** *Per pupil payments will be funded from money that would otherwise flow to MPS. The per student funding would be dependent on the type of school selected by the Commissioner which may be a traditional public school, independent charter (2R) or choice.*
- **HR:** All employees at a school incorporated may apply for a position in the new school. However, such an application waives current and future privileges to be represented by any union as all employment within OSPP is at will.
- **Licensure:** All OSPP employees shall receive non-portable licenses as requested by the commissioner (criminal background checks & federal minimums are retained)

Scalable Implementation

- 2015-2016: the commissioner develops partnerships and selects up to 3 schools to incorporate into the program
- In 16-17 the first school or schools shall operate
- In subsequent years the Commissioner shall manage partnerships, existing campuses, and may incorporate up to 5 new schools per year