

LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION IN MILWAUKEE

What follows is an amalgamation of data points and artifacts that, when considered collectively, provide a snapshot of the state of education in Milwaukee. Often when this story is told, we reference historical metrics that decenter the root cause of our education challenges, allowing us to misunderstand or misclassify the issues before us which prevents us from finding effective, sustainable solutions that serve all people. I believe that the use of inadequate measures for success, whether consciously or inadvertently perpetuated, is intentional. For that reason, the first reflection I'd present re: our education landscape comes from a group of Black parents, Black educators, and Black Community leaders who were united by their concern for the future of Black education in Milwaukee. The group that authored this Manifesto is diverse across several identities - their beliefs about the best sectors of education, politics, levels of education, etc. but all agree in their assessment of where we stand.

A Manifesto for Black Education in the City of Milwaukee | April 2020: *In 1960 Mayor Frank Zeidler created a Study Committee to address the problems of the Inner Core of the City of Milwaukee. This inner core was the terminology of that period used to describe the Black community. Since that time there have been numerous committees, task forces, commissions, etc. to study Black people and to make recommendations on what to do about Black people. It is the continuing quest by white people who control this country and this city to deal with what WEB DuBois called, the "Negro Problem."*

A recent study by University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development stated the following:

Our findings are devastating: on virtually all key measures of Black community well-being, Milwaukee ranks at or near the bottom when ranked against other large metropolitan areas. Moreover, when we examine historical trends in some key areas, the results are equally grim: Black Milwaukee is generally worse off today than it was 40 or 50 years ago.¹

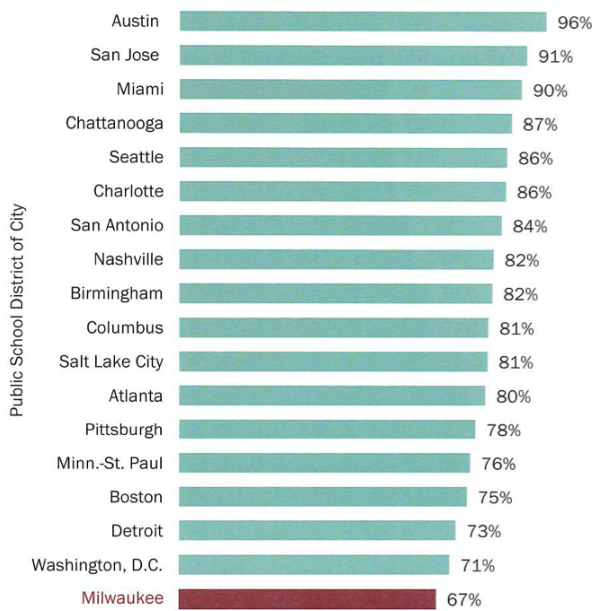
In addition to the studies there have been countless efforts, some of them led by Black people, to address the fundamental historical and contemporary political, social and economic oppression of Black people in this city. At the forefront of so many of these struggles has been the fight for a quality education for our children. That fight has taken many forms over the years: trying to get Black people hired as teachers and then administrators in the Milwaukee Public School System (MPS); the legal battle for school desegregation; an effort to create a Metropolitan School District; an effort to create a "East Shore Unified School District" consisting of the Shorewood School District, the Whitefish Bay School District and several east side MPS schools; a proposal to create a "North Division School District" made up of schools in the North Division cluster; the passage of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) which gave vouchers to low income parents in the city of Milwaukee to be used to attend private schools; the creation of charter schools to provide additional public school options for families in Milwaukee; numerous initiatives from inside and outside of the system to improve teaching and learning inside MPS. Despite all of these efforts as we prepare to enter into a post COVID-19 era the educational results for Black children in this city remain dismal and unacceptable.

¹ The State of Black Milwaukee in National Perspective: Racial Inequality in the Nation's 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas in 65 Charts and Tables – published by the Center for Economic Development at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Unless you are discussing education within the context of systems and systemic oppression, you will continue to perpetuate the inequities that exist within our education ecosystem. No measure alone will tell the full story of our education landscape, and no (current) measure can be improved in isolation to advance education. Below, however, I've included a few data points that should be considered as we think about education in Milwaukee:

EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE

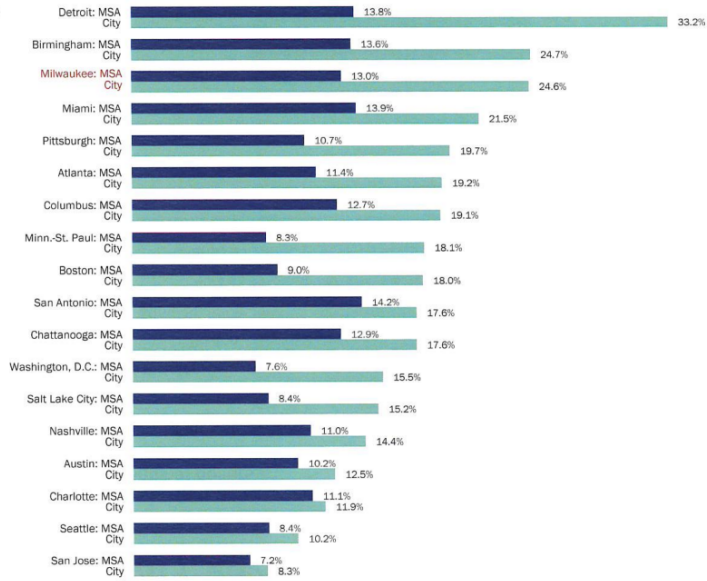
This chart shows the percent of high school students who graduate with a high school diploma in each city school district in four years. The data are from various states' education departments and are for the Class of 2020, with the exception of the following cities, whose most recent data reflect the Class of 2019: Columbus, San Jose



Notes: Chattanooga figure is for Hamilton County. Minn.-St. Paul represents a weighted average of the graduation rates of the Minneapolis Public School District and the St. Paul Public School District, by the total number of potential graduates (i.e., the denominator for the four-year graduation rate) in each school district.

ECONOMIC: PORTION OF POPULATION IN POVERTY, 2020

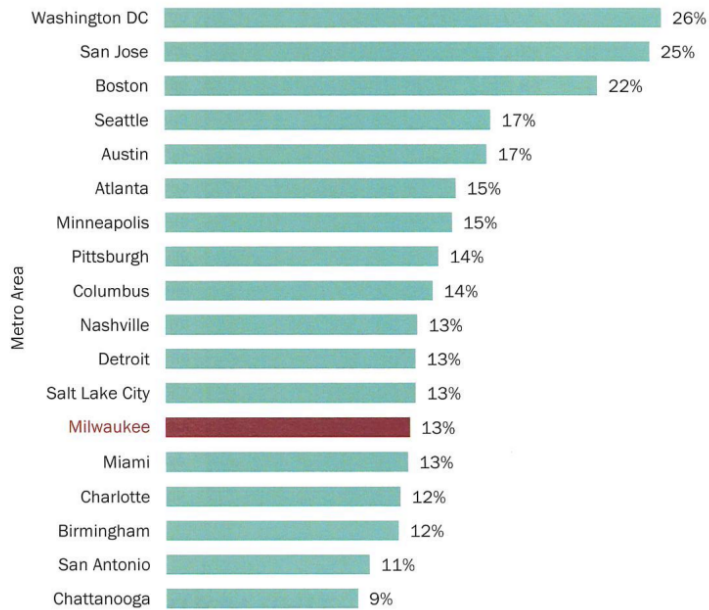
This chart shows the percentage of the population in households living below the national poverty level in 2020 in each Metropolitan Statistical Area and city. The national poverty level is defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The data are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 5-Year American Community Survey.



Notes: Minneapolis-St. Paul city data reflect a weighted average for Minneapolis and St. Paul (using 2020 populations). Nashville city data are for metro government of Nashville and Davidson County.

EDUCATION: PORTION OF POPULATION AGE 25 & OLDER WITH A GRADUATE DEGREE, 2020

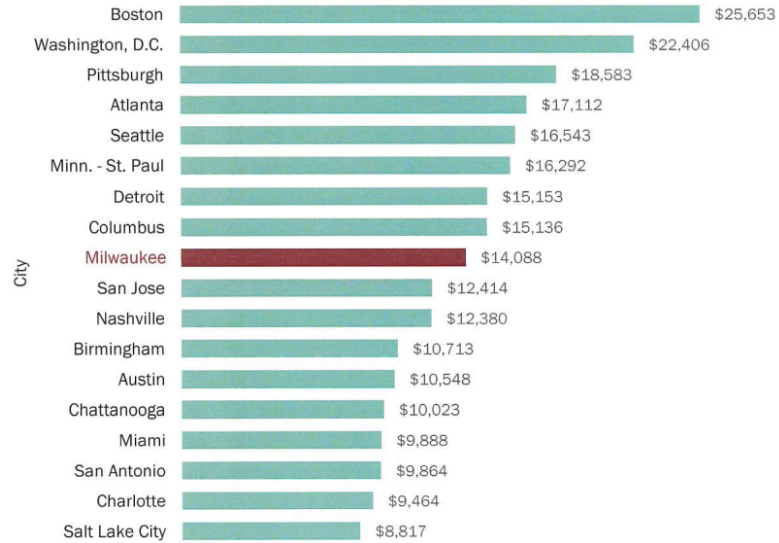
This chart shows the percentage of each Metropolitan Statistical Area's population, age 25 or older, that held a graduate degree in 2020. The data are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 5-Year American Community Survey.



EDUCATION: K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING PER STUDENT, 2019

This chart shows the per-pupil spending for elementary and secondary students in each city's public schools in 2019. The data are from the U.S. Census Bureau's Annual Survey of School System Finances.

For Pittsburgh, Columbus, Milwaukee, Birmingham, San Antonio, Minn.-St. Paul, and Salt Lake City, there are multiple public-school districts within each city. For these cities, a weighted average was calculated using the percentage of students enrolled within each school district.



SOCIAL: DISSIMILARITY INDEX OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION, 2013-2017

For each Metropolitan Statistical Area in 2017, this chart gives an indication of the degree of residential segregation. The "dissimilarity index" ranges from 0 (if every census tract in an MSA has the same mix of races or ethnicities as does the MSA as a whole) to 100 (if members of different races or ethnicities live in entirely different census tracts). A city with an index of 60 or above is typically considered to be highly segregated. A city with a value of 30 or below is typically considered to be well integrated, at least relative to most cities.

The data are from the 2013-17 5-Year American Community Survey, analyzed in Daniel C. Vock, J. Brian Charles and Mike Maciag, "Segregated in the Heartland: An Investigative Series," *Governing*, January 23, 2019.

