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MPS response to progress report: "incredible efforts" are under way

By [Erin Richards](#) of the Journal Sentinel

April 1, 2010 | [\(24\) Comments](#)

Milwaukee Public Schools today provided some response to the not-so-much-progress [progress report](#) recently issued by an independent expert who's overseeing the implementation of an educational improvement plan in the district.

[In a letter](#), MPS Superintendent William Andrekopoulos and School Board President Michael Bonds tell Alan Coulter, the independent expert, that it's unfortunate his report doesn't "accurately reflect the incredible efforts underway by the District" and that it seems he has been "factually deprived of pertinent information" regarding MPS' progress.

In an e-mail today, Roseann St. Aubin, district spokeswoman, also said there appears to be a communication problem between the Department of Public Instruction in Madison and Coulter in New Orleans.

But, she also said that Coulter is required to do these progress reports under the settlement agreement between Disability Rights Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and that MPS is not a party to this settlement.

"The district has long held the position that the agreement between DRW and DPI does not direct resources in a manner that would yield the most effective results for students," she wrote. "There are several legal issues that surround the agreement. The case in general is in various stages of resolution."

Coulter [said yesterday](#) that while MPS is appealing parts of its lawsuit with Disability Rights Wisconsin, it has not appealed his appointment as independent expert, or the "Jamie S. Compliance Plan" he developed with DPI.

So, he said, the district should be complying with - instead of resisting - elements of the plan, and adhering to the timelines in the plan for implementing those elements.

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1. [plainjane - Apr 01, 2010 1:26 PM](#)

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[01](#)

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Gee, just like in the real world "E" for effort doesn't mean very much. It's bad enough our schools are teaching children to "feel good" about themselves without backing up their feelings with some real work, now we have to give MPS a pass because they are trying so hard. No matter that all this "incredible effort" hasn't accomplished anything.

2. [dsmaxsucks - Apr 01, 2010 1:40 PM](#)

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Who cares about effort? I'm sure our kids try really really hard on their standardized tests, and still the results are staggering.

It is embarrassing that government officials like Andrekopoulos would fall back on things such as effort. He should make an effort to move up his resignation date.

Call us when the new guy gets RESULTS. This isn't the Special Olympics, it's our kids.

3. [sick n tired - Apr 01, 2010 1:44 PM](#)

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didn't do your homework, smarts start with the parents

"government officials like Andrekopoulos"

what is he, the mayor? no that's Barrett.....

4. [hunter1970 - Apr 01, 2010 1:46 PM](#)

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You know this Michael Bonds really is only concerned about his job and the teachers. If he really cares about the kids why doesn't he and the board go fire all the teachers in the 4th grade where 91% of them can't read worth a lick. Yes, that's correct 1st place for the worst performance of reading in the entire country. This Bonds guy needs to go and get a life. He's a power master and if you listen to him on the radio am dial side of things 1290 to be exact which is lib black station you know he makes it sound like everything is fine and we have plan for MPS. Well, sir it hasn't done anything and all you care about is more money and preserving the teacher jobs which most of them can't do. Andrekopoulos is just as bad but at least he's leaving don't let the door hit you on the way out. The new sup coming in basically kissed Bonds rear end so we might be in big trouble again and he comes from a district that is 1/10 the size of MPS. I give him 2 years and he's corrupt on top of it....

5. [phish4brains - Apr 01, 2010 2:04 PM](#)

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Can we get examples of these so called incredible efforts? If they were so incredible, you think they would be proud to state what they are. Sounds like more bs spewing from the mouths of these incompetent and delusional mismanagers.

6. [BIGTRUTH - Apr 01, 2010 2:07 PM](#)

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This is about educating our local kids so I am pulling for MPS. So here is my advice.

Take the report for its word and begin devising strategies to fix the problems with student achievement. We are at a critical crossroads where we don't need a P.R. campaign.

7. [DriverIsTheMan - Apr 01, 2010 2:11 PM](#)

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31

Please. I'll say what everyone is thinking.

The problem with MPS isn't the teachers. It's not the government. It's really not even the students. It's the parent. And that's parent, not parents. Most of these kids have no fathers. They have seven siblings from three or four deadbeat dads who are on street corners somewhere. Mom is probably not even 40 by the time the kids are in high school. She uses her welfare check to buy an iPhone instead of clothes for the seven kids she doesn't raise.

These kids have nothing at home. No discipline, no example. They don't have a chance. That's not anything a school district or a teacher can fix. It's hopeless, incredible effort or not.

8. [DriverIsTheMan - Apr 01, 2010 2:13 PM](#)

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hunter1970,

Firing teachers isn't going to make a lick of difference. Do you honestly think all the 4th grade teachers are SO bad, that's why the students are achieving so poorly? It's environment, dude. You can lead a horse to water, you can't make him drink.

9. [mike3333 - Apr 01, 2010 2:51 PM](#)

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Laughable

10. [DevilDog6046 - Apr 01, 2010 2:52 PM](#)

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Here are my solutions:

Shorten the term for school board members to 2 years to add a level of accountability and the ability to elect new members sooner if the current members are failing.

Require the employees at Central Office bring their own supplemental supplies and give the savings to the schools instead of the schools requiring parents bring in crayons, paper towels, etc., for their child's class every year.

Restructure the teacher's contracts. While I agree most teachers work very hard I just cannot see justifying a music teacher nor a physical education teacher earning \$72,000 per year plus benefits. Likewise, Librarians nor Office personnel deserve this rate of pay.

Eliminate duplicate positions such as multiple Principals or Vice-Principals for schools.

Lastly, require specific attendance requirements AND grades for a parent to be eligible for ANY type of assistance. If the child does not meet attendance requirements and grade requirements the parent(s) does/do not receive their unemployment, alimony, SSI, nor Child Support incomes until the problem is rectified. I guaranty those parents will make education a priority for their child(ren) then.

11. [hunter1970 - Apr 01, 2010 2:55 PM](#)

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DriverIsTheMan you think 91% is the environment you think Milw is worse than Detroit???Have you been there lately and they did better than us. Or Youngstown or Toledo???That's a cop out...only 9% can read ONLY 9% in entire 4th grade of MPS. If they can't read and you pass them on and they graduate down the road without being able to read you think they could land a job? You don't want to fire a single teacher are you nuts??? This is acceptable to you? That's like saying the Bucks, Packers, Brewers should never get new players. You have the same tired board members running the show here and principals, teachers there all getting fat on the taxpayer because they don't care about the kids. You don't have more than 90% failing because of the environment. You need to get rid of the dead wood. Milw is the worst city in the country you have

to come up something better than that.. I realize parents are part of it but they don't make the 91% there is more to it than that....

12. [GoyitoMKE - Apr 01, 2010 3:44 PM](#)

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Rather than (finally) facing up to its continued failure, MPS is just making excuses for a failing report card.

And sorry, but those who keep talking about the environment that MPS students come from are really saying that poor kids can't learn and are doomed to failure. That's not only unfair to these children, but is also a dereliction of duty. What's the alternative? Build a bunch more prisons to warehouse them?

13. [benzden - Apr 01, 2010 3:48 PM](#)

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in·cred·i·ble (n-krd-bl)

adj.

1. So implausible as to elicit disbelief: gave an incredible explanation of the cause of the accident. (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/incredible>)

Hey, finally someone is "factually" correct over there at our local (mis)educational institution.

14. [OneTug - Apr 01, 2010 3:54 PM](#)

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It has nothing to do with the economic means of the family. You missed the larger point; namely, rotten, absentee parenting leads to rotten, absentee students.

15. [jimmy chitwood - Apr 01, 2010 3:59 PM](#)

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Hunter, those kids should have already had a foundation to learn to read. Does that mean that the K to 3 teachers should be fired as well? It didn't just start in fourth grade. Maybe the parents should get a crash course so they can help the teachers. Just another note. Run on sentences while trying to denigrate teachers is not such a good idea.

This is just another response in the long line of responses from this district. Hedge your bets and don't say where this "effort" is occurring.

16. [DriverIsTheMan - Apr 01, 2010 4:02 PM](#)

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Hunter,

Please. I learned to read when I was 6. They should have been taught how to read long before 4th grade. So I guess we should just fire all the teachers then? Do you really think the problem is that EVERY MPS teacher is that bad?

No. I'd advise you to visit one of the problem schools. More than half the kids aren't even there!! How is a teacher supposed to get anything done when most of the students don't show up. And the ones that do have their MP3 players on. It's a joke. MPS' problem is 98% PARENTS.

17. [DevilDog6046 - Apr 01, 2010 4:26 PM](#)

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hunter1970 - While I agree with your statements regarding Michael Bonds, I have to agree with DriverIsTheMan in regards to students learning to read prior to the 4th grade.

I have two daughters in a "top-performing" MPS school. One is in 3rd Grade and she can READ, write, and speak BOTH English and German! My other daughter is in K5 and can read some words in both English and German already. I did/do read to my children, but only in English... the German reading, writing, and speaking is 100% taught in school. This school is a top performing school because it has excellent teachers AND a VERY HIGH parent involvement!

I do believe there are other concerns as well (please see my previous comment for my recommended solutions).

18. [hunter1970 - Apr 01, 2010 4:37 PM](#)

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DriveristheMan Did I say all of them? There has be some bad teachers in there they can't justify passing kids on like this. Yes, I said parents are a part of it but jesus your saying 98% of the parents are bad? I agree it would be well over 50% but 98% your saying that every resident in the city doesn't know what there doing. As far Jim Chitwood I know that they don't have a foundation I'm just stating some facts that the JS reported a few days ago about 4th graders and up. The focus was that age and higher. My point being they just pass these kids with no recourse. Why would the teachers pass them on if they know they can't read? There has to be some responsibility somewhere and that's where if I were running MPS I would not put up with this garbage. Yes, parents are half of it but keep in mind these kids are with the teachers for the entire day and there not learning anything. They are suppose to be teaching which there doing a lousy job of. Like I said both of them you can lump together. At least you can cure some of the problem by dumping most of the current teachers. I'm sure there has to be a few decent teachers in there. Just so you know this MPS failure has been going on for 20 years now and has gotten worse and all they keep doing is new ideas and plans. No one ever gets fired and I think like you Jimmy we need a new foundation. MPS current foundation is failing big-time.

19. [wutwut - Apr 01, 2010 4:56 PM](#)

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This is an April Fools joke by William Andrekopoulos and Michael Bonds. There are no "incredible efforts" underway. The same old sh*t will be shoveled.

20. [dsmxsucks - Apr 01, 2010 5:51 PM](#)

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Anyone who wants to blame "rotten, absentee parenting leads to rotten, absentee students" is obviously not putting much thought into this.

We are hardly the only urban area in the country. There are rotten parents and rotten students in every state. Some of these other states accept that challenge and educate their kids anyway. Milwaukee, on the other hand, has the worst reading scores in the country! Worse than formerly segregated southern cities?

People don't need to be fired. They need to be jailed.

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