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## Governor Doyle, Mayor Barrett Announce Effort to Reform MPS

MADISON—Governor Jim Doyle and Mayor Tom Barrett, joined by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Elizabeth Burmaster, announced today a broad effort to drive innovation, school improvement and fiscal responsibility in the Milwaukee Public Schools. The announcement comes following the completion of a comprehensive independent review of the finances and non-instructional operations of MPS commissioned by the Governor and Mayor in October 2008.

“The economic future of Milwaukee, and future of the State of Wisconsin, hinges on the ability of Milwaukee’s families, communities, and schools to prepare well educated, highly trained and skilled graduates for success in higher education, the workplace, and life,” Governor Doyle said. “MPS is facing tremendous academic and financial challenges, but we also have historic opportunities to work together to reform and improve academic achievement in the state’s largest school district.”

“Our paramount concern is improving the academic achievement in MPS,” Mayor Barrett said. “We need to get MPS’ fiscal house in order to free up resources to help improve academic outcomes.”

The comprehensive review of MPS’ finances and operations confirms what other recent studies have suggested and many others have long suspected: MPS has serious academic challenges at the same time it is facing a serious long-term financial problem. The review reinforces that MPS’ budget is currently unsustainable, due to increasing expenses, declining enrollment and the financial impacts of the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, and that MPS lacks a strong performance management system to drive, implement, and sustain changes needed to bring about fiscal and academic reforms.

“By working together, we can seize this opportunity to drive innovation, school improvement, and fiscal responsibility in MPS, which will have a profound effect on student achievement,” said State Superintendent Burmaster.

The MPS Innovation and Improvement Initiative, which will be led by Governor Doyle and Mayor Barrett in conjunction with Superintendent Burmaster, has five main tenets:

- **Compete for American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funding** - Working together with educators, parents, and the community, Governor Doyle and Mayor Barrett will lead Milwaukee-based efforts to compete for federal incentive grant funding available through the ARRA. These highly competitive federal grants are intended to reward states and districts that are making major reforms to successfully reduce achievement gaps and improve student learning.

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- **Develop a comprehensive, district-wide school improvement plan** – Governor Doyle and Mayor Barrett, in partnership with Superintendent Burmaster, will join together with a broad base of local community stakeholders to drive major school improvement and reform in MPS and develop a comprehensive, district-wide school improvement plan that promotes innovation, accountability, and results. The plan will also identify opportunities to leverage existing funds, including what is anticipated to be over \$100 million in federal stimulus funding for low-income and special needs students, to support improving student achievement in MPS.
- **Develop a corrective action plan** - The district-wide school improvement plan developed through this partnership effort will become the state's "corrective action plan" for the Milwaukee Public Schools. Under federal law, the Department of Public Instruction is required to impose corrective action on MPS due to its status as a district "identified for improvement" for more than two years in a row, and MPS is required to comply.
- **Fiscal responsibility and transparency** – The initiative will put in place new efforts to oversee financial and performance management in the district, which will be incorporated into the district's corrective action plan.
- **MPS Innovation and Improvement Advisory Council** – A council comprised of local stakeholders will help to inform and guide the work and put MPS and the state in the best position to improve student achievement and compete for federal dollars. In addition, an MPS Innovation and Improvement project manager will be identified to manage the initiative on a day-to-day basis.

To read the comprehensive review of MPS's finances and operations, go to:

<http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=16332>.

Answers to frequently asked questions on the MPS Review project are available here:

<http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/docview.asp?docid=16335>.