

M³



IMPACT REPORT 2021-22



INTRODUCTION

M³ (pronounced M-cubed) is transforming the future of our young people and Milwaukee communities through the power of public education by multiplying the impact of Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee Area Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

In 2021-22, M³ continued to break down barriers between students and success — and build bridges that link K-12 to higher education.

Our fast-growing M³ College Connections dual enrollment program helped more MPS students earn up to 21 credits by taking college-level classes on campus at both MATC and UWM through College Connections.

In this year's impact report, we invite you to learn more about the continued significant growth of our dual enrollment efforts, the holistic approach we are taking to support MPS graduates heading to MATC and UWM, and the barriers we are tearing down to help them persist and succeed in higher education. We continue to closely monitor data to identify where improvement is needed and develop the steps to increase success. [Our dashboard is public](#) so everyone can better understand the challenges and monitor our shared progress.

As M³ partners, we are empowering students to build the future they deserve, eliminating equity gaps and ultimately, transforming the future of Milwaukee through education.

CONNECTING LEARNING

M³ partners are analyzing education from new perspectives and are promoting the transition from high school to college as a continuum rather than a series of steps. Our educators are rethinking practices and embracing new strategies to better understand students so education delivery is cooperative, equitable and responsive.

More than 600 instructors from MPS, MATC and UWM joined together in February 2022 for professional development to improve practices, address institutional racism, and strategize ways to make education more productive and transparent.

- Keynote speaker Dr. Connie Schroeder, Senior Consultant for Instructional and Organizational Development in the UWM Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, presented *Designing Productive and Equitable Discourse*. The topic was designed to improve teaching practices, better understand students, address institutional racism, and connect curriculum.
- English language arts (ELA) teachers took part in sessions to compare holistic and analytic rubrics, analyze rubric creation, and set intentions to create more descriptive rubrics for writing assessments, benefiting students by increasing understanding before beginning an assignment. ELA teachers then worked to support fine arts integration that leveraged students' talents and interests to enable study and produce work that is personally meaningful.
- In the areas of science and math, science instructors analyzed core texts, expectations, and curriculum; offered ideas to promote effective discussion techniques; and focused on the 5E instructional model – Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate – to improve instruction. Math educators explored ways to support learners, understand the shifts and expectations for teaching K-12 math, and develop students' identity and flexibility in using math.

600 EDUCATORS PARTICIPATED IN JOINT
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN FEB. 2022

SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITIONING

M³ is expanding its reach in order to assist more MPS students in making a successful transition from high school to the next step in their academic careers. Some highlights over the past year:

COLLEGE CONNECTIONS

- Celebrated the accomplishments of 152 MPS students who completed the dual enrollment program with the first in-person ceremony since 2019! It was the largest class yet in College Connections' four-year history. The number of participants rose from 94 in 2021, a 60 percent increase.
- More schools are involved: This year's class came from 19 different MPS schools. The first class of 32 students came from nine schools.
- Since 2019, more than 400 participants have earned more than 5,000 college credits while still in high school – a cost savings of about \$1.5 million.

GRADUATES HAVE SAVED MORE THAN
\$1.5 MILLION

SMART START

- Launched in 2022 to help MPS high school seniors planning to attend MATC or UWM make a smooth transition to college. Plans called for a pilot group supporting more than 60 students, with a goal of eventually growing the program to 500 students.
- Programming begins prior to high school graduation through advising and other support services, bridges through the summer to get students acclimated to college life and extends into the first year on the MATC or UWM campuses.
- This program is possible through generous financial support from Herb Kohl Philanthropies, Kohler Co., and United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County through the UW Credit Union Racial Equity Fund.

DRIVING COMPLETION

M³ partners are working collaboratively to engage employers and schools in providing progressive work-based learning experiences for students, from high school through college. These experiences focus on assisting students to develop broad, transferable skills for postsecondary education and the workplace. This work has unfolded in the following ways:

- Hosted two separate job fairs for over 600 MPS juniors and seniors seeking internships, early workforce experiences, seasonal and ongoing employment; the fairs welcomed close to 100 employers
- Hosted on-campus job fairs for recent MPS graduates to better connect students with employment opportunities at MATC and UWM
- Hosted an M³ webinar for local employers on *Work-Based Learning as a Tool to Build the Region's Diverse Talent Pipeline*
- Established a partnership with the Kohler Co. to plan and create a continuum of progressive work-based learning experiences including site visits, design contests, scholarships and internships

M³ partners again worked together to encourage MPS students to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), a key application that unlocks opportunities to access grants, scholarships, loans and forms of aid to help pay for college.

- The number of MPS students in the class of 2022 who completed the FAFSA was up 8% this year (nationally, completions are up 4%). This increase reverses the decline in FAFSA completion rates during the first years of the COVID-19 pandemic, mirroring trends in school districts around the country.
- Retention grants of up to \$500 for low-income students or others in need in their junior or senior year helped students stay on track to graduate from MATC and UWM.
- Both MATC and UWM audited holds on student accounts and eliminated many categories of holds that prevented students from re-enrolling.

**FAFSA
UP 8%**
FAFSA COMPLETION WAS
UP BY 8% FROM LAST YEAR

**WE'RE EMPOWERING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES TO BUILD THE FUTURE THEY WANT AND DESERVE,
AND ENSURING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND OUR REGION THRIVE. LEARN MORE AT [UWM.EDU/M-CUBED](https://uwm.edu/m-cubed).**