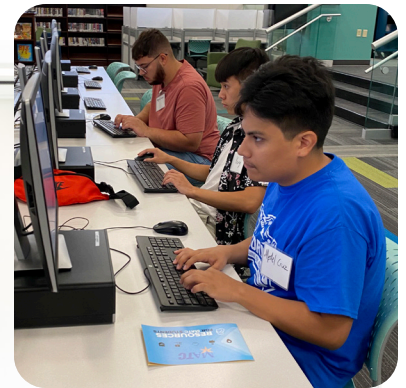


# M<sup>3</sup>



# 2023 IMPACT REPORT



**+12%**

FAFSA COMPLETION  
ABOVE STATE AVERAGE

**\$500,000+**

IN STUDENT TUITION SAVINGS  
THROUGH DUAL ENROLLMENT



**400%**

INCREASE IN PARENT  
INSTITUTE PARTICIPATION

## DEAR PARTNERS:

At a time when the number of high school students going directly on to higher education is in decline, M<sup>3</sup> (pronounced M-Cubed) is helping students see the value of college and achieving the opposite – positive results through the exponential power of our collective impact. We are lifting up individual students and their families, eliminating equity gaps, and helping build the region's diverse workforce.

As you'll read in this year's Impact Report, our largest efforts are growing and yielding results:

- College Connections helps students earn college credit.
- FAFSA completion unlocks access to higher education after high school.
- The Milwaukee Parent Institute helps families support their students.
- Smart Start ensures more high school graduates follow through on their college plans.
- Work-based learning helps students gain workforce knowledge and experience.

To continue our growth and ensure our students are prepared for the world of work, M<sup>3</sup> is proudly launching a business council. We will share more with you as 2023-24 progresses.

In the meantime, thank you for your continued partnership. Your support is yielding real results.

Sincerely,

Vicki J. Martin, Ph.D., President, Milwaukee Area Technical College,  
Mark A. Mone, Ph.D., Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Keith P. Posley, Ed.D., Superintendent, Milwaukee Public Schools

## COLLEGE CONNECTIONS: 2023 GRADS EARN 1,500+ CREDITS, SAVE \$500,000+

Terry Young spent his senior year of high school taking not only high school courses, but also college courses. And the graduate of Milwaukee Public Schools' MacDowell Montessori School was also holding down a job.

"It was definitely a challenge and hard to maintain that lifestyle, but I'm better prepared for the future," he said.

Young was one of a group of 94 high school seniors who graduated in June from the M<sup>3</sup> College Connections program with a head start on higher education. Many of the students attended a graduation ceremony honoring them June 7 at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Lubar Entrepreneurship Center.

The seniors from 15 Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) completed up to 21 college credits during their final year of high school through the program, a partnership that includes MPS, Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM). The three partners established the M<sup>3</sup> College Connections program in 2019.

Students can take college-level courses in English and mathematics at MATC and educational psychology and ethnic studies courses at UWM. Students also have the option of taking nursing or science courses at MATC.

The program can also help students save money as they start higher education. With the average cost of a college credit around \$300, this year's students have saved more than \$500,000 dollars in tuition expenses, according to MPS Superintendent Keith Posley.

Since the pilot courses started in 2019, 529 high school students have earned 6,756 credits, according to M<sup>3</sup> figures.



## FAFSA: EFFORTS PUSH MPS ABOVE STATE AVERAGE

Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson and Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley – both Milwaukee Public Schools alumni – joined M<sup>3</sup> leaders this year to urge high school seniors to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to help pay for higher education.



“I want all our youth to aspire to go to college and want them to know that filling out the FAFSA is an incredibly helpful tool,” Crowley said during an October news conference at MPS’ Hamilton High School.

Filling out the FAFSA shows students the grants and loans they are eligible for to pay for higher education. Many families feel college is out of reach until they see their FAFSA results. Completing the FAFSA is an important step in reversing declines in college enrollment brought about by the pandemic.

For the 2022–23 school year, MPS required high school students (with waivers available) to fill out the FAFSA in order to graduate. UWM Chancellor Mark Mone and MATC President Vicki J. Martin have offered strong support for the change.

The new requirement, combined with a push from M<sup>3</sup> partners, helped MPS reach 60% FAFSA completion as of July 21, up from 48% at the same time the prior year and besting the state average by about 12 percentage points.

“Over the years, we have made gains, but our work is not done until we reach 100%,” said MPS Superintendent Keith P. Posley.

**+12%**  
FAFSA COMPLETION  
ABOVE STATE AVERAGE

## MILWAUKEE PARENT INSTITUTE: 400% GROWTH IN ENGAGING PARENTS

The M<sup>3</sup> Milwaukee Parent Institute is a proven program that equips Milwaukee Public Schools elementary, middle and high school families with the knowledge and skills to help their students graduate and prepare for higher education. Since fall 2021, this program has grown dramatically.

The Milwaukee Parent Institute is a six-week program offered both in person and virtually at schools across MPS. Students and families learn how to plan for college and a career, develop behaviors for success, select high school courses to prepare for higher education, and explore career fields.

By expanding from two sessions in the first “baseline” semester to 16 sessions in spring 2023, the program has grown from engaging 66 parents to 275, about a 400% increase. To support the program and continue this growth pattern, MPS has strategically utilized federal funds to hire a school counselor to serve as the Milwaukee Parent Institute Coordinator. Among other responsibilities, the position helps improve the performance of facilitators running the sessions and helps drive recruiting efforts to attract families to the program.

The institute was developed by the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE), which engages, empowers and transforms families by providing the knowledge and skills to partner with schools and communities to ensure their students achieve their full potential. PIQE uses documented research studies that validate the efficacy of the programs and the impact on student achievement such as grade point averages and graduation rates.

At the conclusion of each session, families and students celebrate their completion of the program. Feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive.



## SMART START: 76% OF FIRST INITIAL COHORT ATTENDING MATC OR UWM NATIONALLY, ONLY 38% OF 18- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS ARE ENROLLED IN COLLEGE

The inaugural year of the M<sup>3</sup> Smart Start program showed great promise in helping high school students follow through on their intent to enroll in college.

Smart Start launched in advance of the Fall 2022 semester as a partnership among UWM, MATC and MPS. Its explicit goal is to reduce the phenomenon of “summer melt,” which occurs when high school graduates say they intend to enroll in college, but then fail to do so. This happens with roughly 10% to 40% of high school seniors nationally, according to Harvard University’s Center for Education Policy research. For local context, 63% of MPS high school graduates in 2019 said they intended to enroll in college, but only 40% completed the enrollment process. Across the country, fewer than 40% of individuals ages 18 to 24 are enrolled in higher education.

Smart Start set up summer support sessions for an initial cohort of 62 MPS graduates, including a math course taught through UWM and MATC that 19 students completed to earn up to \$500 in scholarships. Overall, 47 of the 62 students enrolled at either UWM or MATC, a success rate of 75.8%.



The Smart Start program continued through the fall semester with coaching sessions designed to foster student retention throughout the school year. In addition to students from the initial cohort, further recruitment brought the total number of students to 276. By completing three or more coaching sessions, students could earn a \$250 scholarship, and 59 students did so, including 12 who had earned scholarships from the summer session. Of those 59 students, 33 were enrolled at UWM and 93.9% of them were retained into the spring semester, while 26 were at MATC and 65.4% of them were retained into spring.

STUDENTS CAN  
EARN UP TO  
**\$500**  
IN SCHOLARSHIPS

The Smart Start program will continue into a second year with an ultimate goal of serving as many as 500 students annually.

## WORK-BASED LEARNING: JOB FAIR GROWTH LEADS TO DUAL EVENTS

This spring, nearly 1,000 MPS students took part in an on-campus experience in the UWM Student Union to explore careers and look for part-time and long-term employment.

Now in its sixth year, the event has become so popular among students and employers that two dates are held – one for high school juniors and another for seniors.

The pair of job fairs attracted 131 employers this year. Many were looking for part-time and summer workers, as well as businesses seeking to hire MPS seniors after graduation in May.

Students were able to browse sectors such as law enforcement, manufacturing, food service and hospitality, landscaping, building trades, healthcare, nonprofit, recreation, and transportation.

**1,000 MPS STUDENTS**  
TOOK PART IN AN ON-CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

**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](http://UWM.EDU/M-CUBED).**