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Rubric for Evaluating the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) 2012 Plan to Eliminate the Racial Academic Achievement Gap

The following rubric was developed and informed by members of the Staff and Board of Directors of the Urban League of Greater Madison, along with business and community leaders, educators and leading experts in the field of K-12 and higher education. It will be used as an objective tool by an independent Community Review Panel, organized by the Urban League, to objectively review Madison Superintendent Daniel Nerad's forthcoming district-wide plan to eliminate the long-standing racial academic achievement gap in Madison's public schools. The panel will provide their feedback and recommendations for improving the plan to the Urban League of Greater Madison, Superintendent, Board of Education and community.

The intent of this review is to ensure MMSD has an optimal plan for ensuring that all of the children it serves succeed academically and graduate from high school prepared for college and work. Specifically, our reasons for establishing this rubric and a Community Review Panel are four-fold:

- Develop an objective and comprehensive understanding of the plan and its many elements;
- Objectively review the efficacy of the plan, its goals and objectives, and desired outcomes;
- Formally communicate thoughts, concerns and ideas for supporting and/or improving the plan; and
- Effectively engage the Madison community in supporting and strengthening its public schools.

The 20-point Due Diligence Review Model

1. (*Priorities*) Sets clear priorities that addresses, at a minimum, the two greatest challenges MMSD continues to wrestle with and that has historically accelerated the pace of decline in other cities and school districts: the racial achievement gap and middle class flight (districts that have given one priority over the other have generally failed at both);
2. (*Vision and Mission*) Presents a bold, achievable vision and mission for our public schools that is focused on preparing all young people for higher education and work, not just high school graduation;
3. (*Innovation*) Embraces the need for new, innovative education models and school structures that are tailored/adapt to the needs, interests and aspirations of children and their families (types of school curricula, longer school day and year, etc.);
4. (*Needs Analysis*) Is evidence-based, where MMSD's proposed goals, strategies and solutions specifically address the outcomes of a comprehensive evaluation of the performance, needs and aspirations of students, educators and schools (see [American Federation of Teachers School Performance Audit](#) as an example of such an evaluation);
5. (*Educational Standards*) Includes implementation of the State's new Common Core Academic Standards and ACT College Readiness Standards;

6. *(Social Impact)* Includes ambitious and aggressive, yet achievable goals and objectives that are specific, measurable and time-bound for:
 - a) Increasing student achievement (at a minimum) in reading/language arts, mathematics and science for all grade levels for all NCLB student subgroups;
 - b) Decreasing achievement gaps between subgroups in reading/language arts, mathematics and science for all grade levels for all NCLB student subgroups;
 - c) Increasing high school graduation (diploma completion), college readiness, and college acceptance and enrollment rates for all student subgroups; and
 - d) Assessing student participation and performance in alternative, career and technical education preparation programs.

Note: This section of the plan should demonstrate the rate that the achievement gap will be closed over the next five to 10 years. In doing so, MMSD should present annualized, numerical and percentage goals for projected gains/increases in student achievement and outcomes by subgroup (including race/ethnicity/gender). MMSD and the community would benefit from extrapolating data for Southeast Asian (Hmong, Vietnamese, Laotian, etc.) students from other Asian students, and doing the same for students who have resided in Madison for 5 years or less, and for longer than 5 years. This would enable MMSD to unmask performance differences and specific challenges these particular student groups might be experiencing in MMSD schools. NCLB refers to the federal No Child Left Behind legislation.

7. *(Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment)* Explains the District's approach to curriculum, instruction and assessment at the preschool, elementary and secondary level, including:
 - a) The actual and/or proposed curricular approaches and offerings at all grade levels, schools, school programs (alternatives), and contract schools (4K program);
 - b) How the professional development needs of administrators, and instructional and non-instructional staff in each type of school mentioned in (a) above will be addressed to ensure educators can successfully adapt to, implement and/or execute curricular and instructional methods and practices in schools;
 - c) How students who are either academically behind, at or above grade level will be nurtured and supported in school, including at-risk, academically exceptional (TAG), ELL and students enrolled in special education;
 - d) An explanation of the MMSD's Culturally Relevant Teaching Program and how such practices and approaches will be implemented in the schools and supported by central administration;
 - e) An explanation of how MMSD will establish a culture of achievement, unity and collaboration among all students in its schools, and how school faculty and staff, central administration, and the community will be enlisted to help reinforce and support this;
 - f) An explanation of MMSD's assessment strategies and plans for measuring the performance of students, educators, paraprofessionals, specialists, administrators, community partnerships and school support/supplementary education programs; and
 - g) Evidence of the effectiveness of strategies and approaches, listed in this section above, that are already in use.
8. *(Efficacy and Evaluation)* Presents evidence of the effectiveness of instructional and non-instructional programs and initiatives that are already operating and are proposed to be expanded; and a thorough rationale for new, proposed innovations;
9. *(21st Century Student Preparation and Readiness)* Presents instructional, program and supplementary education plans that address some of the key elements of the [America Competes Reauthorization Act of 2010](#) that speak to K-12 education; the following widely-known sources have been used in framing the [Federal Race to the Top competition](#) and in developing Madison Prep:
 - [Innovate America Report, 2005](#)
 - [Rising Above the Gathering Storm: Energizing and Employing America for a Brighter Future, 2007](#)
 - [President's Council on Innovation and Competitiveness](#)
 - [President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness](#)
 - [Taking Action, Building Confidence](#) by the President's Jobs Council (Developing Talent, pages 31-35)
10. *(Human Resources)* Explains the District's strategies for recruiting, acclimating and retaining effective and diverse teachers, specialists, support staff and administrators, including how these individuals will be assigned to schools and how success of its HR efforts will be measured;

11. *(Parental Engagement)* Addresses how MMSD will facilitate and support parental involvement and engagement in schools and alternative education programs, including (a) an evaluation of the efficacy of current strategies and practice, (b) an evaluation of how the District's bussing program helps or hinders student achievement and parental involvement, and (c) strategies for alleviating obstacles to parental involvement;
12. *(Internal Stakeholder Engagement)* Presents evidence of thoughtful and significant input from a diversity of principals, teachers, other professionals and paraprofessionals across all MMSD schools;
13. *(External Stakeholder Engagement)* Presents evidence of thoughtful and significant community input, including input from of a diverse cross-section of businesses, nonprofits, service organizations, parents and students;
14. *(Expectations)* Addresses the expectations the school board and district administration will have of themselves, and of school administrators, educators, specialists, paraprofessionals, parents, students, and the community for promoting and executing the plan;
15. *(Accountability)* Addresses how the school board, district and school administration, educators, specialists, paraprofessionals, parents, students and formal community partners will be held accountable for achieving goals, objectives and benchmarks set forth in the plan;
16. *(Marketing & Public Relations)* Explains how the District will regularly inform the Greater Madison community of the progress, modifications and outcomes of its plan, and maintain its focus on achieving its goals and objectives despite potential changes in state and federal school accountability requirements;
17. *(Policy Analysis)* Includes an analysis of school district, local, county, state and federal laws, policies, contracts and collective bargaining agreements that may promote or inhibit the implementation or execution of elements of the plan, with recommendations for how any conflicts can or will be addressed and overcome;
18. *(Implementation and Operations Plans)* Explains how, when and by whom the District's plan will be implemented and evaluated.
19. *(Capital Needs)* Addresses special equipment, facility and related capital needs that will require attention in order to fulfill the goals expressed in the plan; and
20. *(Budget)* Presents a 5-to-10 year budget plan that includes projected revenue sources and needs, along with a budget impact analysis for SY2012-13 if MMSD plans to implement any aspects of its plans during the next school year.

There are two specific areas of concern that the Urban League of Greater Madison (ULGM) is hoping MMSD will address as well, within the context of its plan:

- ❑ *The structure, efficacy and outcomes of MMSD's alternative education programs.* Several MMSD parents, students and staff have reported that there are many students who are enrolled in the District's alternative programs that are receiving very few hours of instruction every day, but will still earn a regular high school diploma. ULGM requests that MMSD conduct a thorough *performance and efficacy audit* of its alternative schools and programs to ensure that students are being adequately prepared for educational success and life after high school.
- ❑ *The District's commitment to planning and evaluation before implementation, expansion or elimination.* It is the Urban League's understanding that MMSD does not routinely analyze or evaluate the efficacy, outcomes and impact of the school innovations, programs and services it invests in. ULGM requests that MMSD review its commitment to program evaluation. ULGM also requests that before programs are invested in or expanded, that solid plans are presented for new programs/innovations and that thorough evaluations of the performance and efficacy of existing programs be completed.