Study finds collaborative efforts among education partners improving outcomes at Carver Academy in Milwaukee

Investments made by Northwestern Mutual funded the project

MILWAUKEE – Academics are improving and school climate is more positive at an MPS elementary school due to a collaborative effort of corporate, education, and nonprofit leaders, according to a report released today by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

The report focused on the work of the *5-in-1 Collaborative*, a partnership involving Milwaukee Public Schools, Schools That Can Milwaukee, City Year Milwaukee, Teach for America-Milwaukee and Northwestern Mutual to effect positive change for school leadership and students at MPS' Dr. George Washington Carver Academy for Mathematics and Science.

The partners demonstrated a collective impact program model that resulted in substantive school improvement, the report found. This finding can help shape other efforts to improve outcomes in other schools.

Among the results of the study of Carver:

Math and reading scores are steadily improving
The number of students who are closing achievement gaps increased
Students who were in the first two years of the program performed even better their second year
Suspensions at the school decreased by 20 percent in just three years

"The transformation at Carver has truly been remarkable," said Carver Principal Janel Hawkins. "Every day we find ourselves using lessons learned from this experience to continue to push academic performance forward."

In 2012, the Northwestern Mutual Foundation and Milwaukee Public Schools initiated the *5-in-1 Collaborative* to improve academic performance and strengthen school climate at Carver, a school that historically struggled academically. City Year Milwaukee, Schools That Can Milwaukee and Teach for America-Milwaukee joined the project in 2013, representing the first time all three of the nonprofits had collaborated together at one MPS site.

"The partner organizations built a true collaborative to improve opportunities for students at Carver Academy," said Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Darienne Driver. "It is improving outcomes for Carver students and is a model for collaborative work in other MPS communities. There is a lot of work to do, but we are headed in the right direction."

The 5-in-1 Collaborative focused on four targets: instruction and learning, culture and climate, family engagement and school leadership effectiveness; and it encouraged partners to rethink their roles and develop shared strategies and actions that aligned their strengths to support students and staff.

"Playing a lead role in bringing these organizations together for the first time in one school was a unique opportunity for us to positively transform a school for the benefit of the community," said Eric Christophersen, president, Northwestern Mutual Foundation. "Through the collective effort, each child at Carver is being given the tools needed to be successful both in the classroom and in life so the study's results showcase that we are achieving the goals we set out to do."

Partners focused on these specific efforts:

Northwestern Mutual Foundation initiated the project to identify a new model of school-community partnership to improve outcomes; funded the project and was a vital strategic partner.
City Year Milwaukee AmeriCorps members provided individual, small group and school-wide interventions and academic supports in key subjects including math and reading.
Schools That Can Milwaukee provided Principal Janel Hawkins and her leadership team with weekly leadership coaching; data analysis and goal-setting support; monthly professional development with other school leaders across the city; and visits to

schools of excellence in other cities.
Teach for America-Milwaukee contributed 10 diverse and talented teachers, supported by TFA Managers of Teacher Leadership Development.
A team of evaluators from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Education served as collaborative partners and evaluators focused on the collective impact framework that guided the collaborative.

Milwaukee Public Schools is already using the lessons learned from the*5-in-1 Collaborative* report to shape and mold new opportunities including:

the establishment of four MPS Community Schools in partnership with United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha and other community organizations to improve student outcomes;
the development of a collaborative effort with seven arts organizations to offer high-quality arts experiences for MPS students in 25 schools; and
the expansion of ProStart, a culinary-arts program designed to prepare students for careers in the fast growing food services industry.

For more on the Carver *5-in-1 Collaborative*, including the evaluation report, outcomes and contacts for ongoing collective impact partnerships within Milwaukee Public Schools, contact Denise Callaway at callawde@milwaukee.k12.wi.us.

What the partners are saying about the Carver "5-in-1 Collaborative"

Northwestern Mutual

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—Eric Christophersen, president, Northwestern Mutual Foundation

Milwaukee Public Schools

"This type of collective impact model has the potential to work in other schools, even if the partners are different. We are excited to 'scale up' this project with new community partners in other Milwaukee Public Schools."

—Dr. Darienne Driver, Milwaukee Public Schools superintendent

City Year Milwaukee

"Due to the increased collaborative efforts at Carver Academy, we are able to focus our individualized support on the students with whom we can have the greatest impact leading to increased academic gains over the past two years."

—Jason M. Holton, City Year Milwaukee vice president and executive director

Schools That Can Milwaukee

"At Schools That Can Milwaukee, we believe leaders are the linchpin of great schools. Principal Hawkins and her team are evidence that strong leaders can be coached and developed to empower teachers and students to change their school for the better. The progress at Carver shows what's possible when adults and organizations work together to put children first. There is a lot of work left to do, but the progress we have seen is undeniable and very exciting."

—April Knox, Schools That Can Milwaukee managing director of school support

Teach for America-Milwaukee

"Working collectively to achieve breakthrough results for our students is powerful. The partnership of strong leaders, school culture, and support at Carver demonstrates the opportunity that exists for us to provide the education our students in Milwaukee deserve. Evolution is happening at Carver and other places throughout our city, and we're thankful to play a part."

—Garrett Bucks, Teach for America-Milwaukee executive director

UW-Milwaukee

“We’re using a developmental evaluation approach, which means sitting on the project team and bringing the research and evaluative thinking to the project.”

“We’re not just giving them a report when things are over and saying this is what we saw. We implement developmental evaluation with fidelity, which means using findings in ways that are useful in real time.”

—Cheryl Baldwin and Rachel Lander, Carver 5-in-1 Collaborative evaluators

Milwaukee neighborhoods, and accelerate the search for cures for childhood cancer nationally.

About Northwestern Mutual Foundation

The mission of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation is to improve the lives of children and families in need. The Foundation has given more than $290 million since its inception in 1992 and is designed to create lasting impact in the communities where the company's employees and financial representatives live and work. We accomplish this by combining financial support, volunteerism, thought leadership and convening community partners to deliver the best outcomes. Our efforts are focused nationally on curing childhood cancer, and locally on education, neighborhoods and making our hometown of Milwaukee a great destination.

About Northwestern Mutual

Northwestern Mutual has been helping families and businesses achieve financial security for nearly 160 years. Our financial representatives build relationships with clients through a distinctive planning approach that integrates risk management with wealth accumulation, preservation and distribution. With $238.5 billion in assets, $27.9 billion in revenues and more than $1.6 trillion worth of life insurance protection in force, Northwestern Mutual delivers financial security to more than 4.3 million people who rely on us for insurance and investment solutions, including life, disability income and long-term care insurance; annuities; trust services; mutual funds; and investment advisory products and services. Northwestern Mutual is recognized by FORTUNE magazine as one of the “World’s Most Admired” life insurance companies in 2016.

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