

NEWS

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MMSD and UW–Madison Form Early Literacy & Beyond Task Force

Media Availability Discussing Task Force to be held at 1:00 p.m. today

MADISON – Today, Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) and the University of Wisconsin–Madison School of Education, announced the formation of a joint Early Literacy and Beyond Task Force which will focus on analyzing the most promising approaches to teaching reading and making recommendations to MMSD and to teacher education programs at UW–Madison toward the goals of improving reading outcomes and reducing achievement gaps.

The task force’s work will be focused on utilizing literacy — at every level — as an equity strategy to ensure all MMSD students receive high-quality, grade level accelerated instruction.

“We are being very intentional about our commitment to early literacy and beyond, and it will be the priority of the district moving forward,” said MMSD Superintendent Dr. Carlton D. Jenkins. “An explicit strategy around early literacy and beyond is an investment – an investment in our children, our families and our community. We know this investment must be sustained over time, and it will also require making an investment in our staff around the teaching of reading.”

The task force is charged with:

- Identifying how literacy, especially early literacy, is currently taught across MMSD and analyzing achievement data for MMSD students with respect to literacy.
- Examining how literacy, especially early literacy, is being taught to teacher education students at UW–Madison’s School of Education and analyzing what these future teachers are currently learning about literacy.
- Reviewing and becoming familiar with the best evidence about the most effective ways to teach literacy in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade — and developing future teachers who can better teach literacy in schools.
- Making recommendations to MMSD and the UW–Madison School of Education about steps to be taken that can strengthen literacy instruction in the Madison Schools and UW–Madison’s teacher education programs.

“We are very pleased to collaborate with MMSD by creating this joint task force that focuses explicitly on what we can do together to improve the reading outcomes of all students,” said School of Education Dean Diana Hess. “The members of the task force are experts in literacy and equity, and I am grateful for their enthusiasm and willingness to commit their time and expertise toward these important goals.”

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The task force will consult with many leading scholars and researchers, including Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, professor emerita at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and president of the National Academy of Education.

The Early Literacy and Beyond Task Force will be charged by Superintendent Jenkins and Dean Hess and composed of an equal number of educators from MMSD and UW–Madison. The task force will be jointly co-chaired by MMSD Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Lisa Kvistad and UW–Madison Professor John Diamond. Members include:

Madison Metropolitan School Dist.	University of Wisconsin-Madison
Lisa Kvistad (Task Force co-chair), Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.	John B. Diamond (Task Force co-chair), Kellner Family Distinguished Chair in Urban Education, Professor with the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis.
Ana Gabriela Bell Jiménez , Interim Director of Literacy and Humanities	Mariana Castro , Deputy Director of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research.
Jorge Covarrubias , Executive Director of Professional Learning and Leadership Development.	Dawnene D. Hassett , Professor with the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.
Lisa Hepburn is a Bilingual Resource Teacher at Sandburg and Randall Elementary Schools.	Melinda Leko , Professor and Chair of the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education.
Angie Hicks is the principal of James C. Wright Middle School	Mark S. Seidenberg , Vilas Research Professor and Donald O. Hebb Professor, Department of Psychology.
Jaclyn Smith , Principal of Gompers Elementary School	Beverly Trezek , Associate Professor and the Tashia F. Morgridge Chair in Reading, Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education.
Chan Stroman , Attorney in private law firm practice, as well as a volunteer reading tutor and former MMSD parent.	Ashley L. White , Assistant professor with the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education.

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****Virtual Press Availability Today with Leaders to Discuss Task Force****

In addition to today's announcement, MMSD will host a media availability with UW-Madison's Dean Hess, Superintendent Jenkins and other MMSD and UW-Madison representatives to provide additional information and answer questions.

Who: MMSD Superintendent Carlton D. Jenkins, UW-Madison School of Education Dean, Diana Hess and other UW-Madison and MMSD representatives

What: Press availability, questions and answers on goals and objectives

When: Monday, December 14 (Today) at 1:00 p.m.

Where:

ZOOM Link: [Early Literacy Press Availability](#)

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