

Your views

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Three key steps to improving education

Wisconsin's new school report card has a way to go, but it is clearly a step in the right direction ("[Report cards give schools look at student growth](#)," Oct. 30). Education stakeholders need an accountability system with high expectations and that meaningfully communicates college and career readiness.

Low performance measures demean students and the teaching profession. Beyond creating a false sense of accomplishment, a lower bar can devastate those students aiming for post-secondary education and discourage those students qualifying but requiring remediation. Systems built on lower expectations prove more costly in the long run.

Elevating performance standards requires a higher skill set by both students and teachers. Fortunately for Milwaukeeans, many initiatives are already in place to promote this level of rigor and relevance. Many nationally recognized college and university schools of education are adjusting their programs as well. Schools within and outside traditional urban schools are demonstrating that all students are capable of high achievement. The results are encouraging.

Three improvements stand out. Every student needs 1) a great start, a meaningful early childhood educational foundation by which subsequent learning can take place, 2) a rich and viable curriculum and 3) highly effective teachers.

It is only with a strong early childhood foundation that new understanding and learning takes hold. A strong early childhood education is the bridge to opportunity. Milwaukee students need a strong early childhood foundation to succeed.

All students deserve a guaranteed and viable curriculum that is rich in content, critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration. These are the ingredients necessary for success in a highly competitive global economy.

Last but not least, all students deserve highly effective teachers. The National School Board Association/The Center for Public Education states that "Teacher quality more heavily influenced differences in student performance than did race, class or school of student; disadvantaged students benefited more from good teachers than advantaged students."

Many teachers are capable and willing but have not received the appropriate training to succeed in an urban setting. We need to give serious attention to redesigning teacher preparation programs to better equip and acculturate teacher candidates for success. With this model, both teachers and students win.

Students and teachers can reach high achievement levels with the right supports.

These are the necessary investments for any successful cradle-to-career initiative.