

“Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

James Baldwin

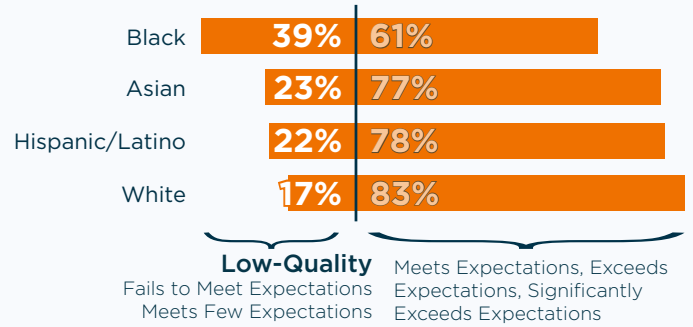
All of Milwaukee’s children have inherent talent, inherent worth, and infinite possibilities – they are as gifted and as capable as any and every other child. Educational opportunity and access to high-quality school choices, however, are not equally distributed within our city. City Forward Collective exists to secure our city’s future by eliminating these educational inequities and ensuring that every Milwaukee child has access to high-quality K-12 school options.

For far too long, Milwaukee has sat at or near the top of lists cataloging various racial and ethnic disparities in opportunities and outcomes. K-12 education in the city is not exempt from this painful narrative, nor from the root causes that have created and continue to sustain these inequities. In particular, Black students in our city have materially less access to high-quality schools and are achieving academic success at significantly lower rates than their peers. In turn, they are entering adulthood with less of a chance to thrive and live lives of agency and self-determination.

We firmly believe that these narratives reflect failures of adults and systems. Our children are the solution, not the problem. In turn, it is our collective responsibility to unapologetically speak out and courageously fight to dismantle the injustices that perpetuate inequitable and lower quality-of-life outcomes.

School Quality Access by Student Racial/Ethnic Group

Black students are the racial/ethnic group most likely to attend low-quality schools



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction 2021 School Report Cards

As an organization, our core value of **Justice** calls for us to serve as a leading voice and actor in these efforts.

Our core value of **Impact** drives us to focus on data and results – both quantitative and qualitative – to set measurable goals, plan and execute against them, and honestly and critically evaluate and reflect on our performance in pursuit of continuous improvement.

Our core value of **Equity** directs us to take this same, impact-centered approach to eliminating the gaps in resources and opportunities and the disparities in outcomes faced by our city’s students, families, and communities.

It is these values – **Justice**, **Impact**, and **Equity** – that directly inform our commitment to sharing data about the performance of our city’s students and schools, including disaggregated data by subgroup whenever possible.

(**Note:** While this statement is intended to address inequities related to racial and ethnic identities, we are aware that inequities also exist along other lines of identity, and we are likewise committed to addressing those through our work.)

Leaders in both local government and the private sector have committed themselves to pursuing racial equity:

- City of Milwaukee: [Racial Equity \(milwaukee.gov\)](https://milwaukee.gov/Racial-Equity) and [Racial Equity Data \(milwaukee.gov\)](https://milwaukee.gov/Racial-Equity-Data)
- Milwaukee County: [Achieving Racial Equity \(milwaukee.gov\)](https://milwaukee.gov/Achieving-Racial-Equity)
- Metro Milwaukee Association of Commerce: [Equity - Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce \(mmac.org\)](https://mmac.org/Equity-Metropolitan-Milwaukee-Association-of-Commerce)

We commend and support these and other efforts. Our own commitments are taken in the same spirit of facing these uncomfortable realities – to use data to shine a light both on what is working, and on where there’s work to be done – so that we can in turn work together to change this narrative and truly secure our city’s future.

How our strategies advance equity

City Forward Collective’s commitment to accelerating educational equity and equitable representation is illustrated by the following three examples of our strategic and evidence-based programs and initiatives:

- Since 2020, City Forward Collective has invested \$475,000 in grants to enhance the teacher pipeline for K-12 schools in Milwaukee, with special emphasis on teachers from the same races and ethnic groups represented among Milwaukee students.
- In 2022, City Forward Collective graduated the 8th Cohort of the Burke Fellowship program in partnership with Alverno College. The Burke Fellowship supports City Forward Collective’s Effective and Representative Talent Strategy by improving the quantity, diversity, and effectiveness of school leaders in Milwaukee. In Cohort 8, 55% of fellows identified their race/ethnicity as Hispanic/Latino, 27% of identified as Black, and 18% identified as White.
- In March 2022, Cohort 5 of the Family Leadership Institute (FLI) convened with 21 parents of students who attend private choice, public charter, and traditional public schools. Since its inception, FLI has supported more than 83 parents and caregivers with resources, support, and training to assist them in reaching their goals around advocating for positive change in their child’s education. FLI’s aim to promote equity is also evident in the identities of those engaged in the program, with 69% identifying as Black, 21% as Hispanic/Latino, 7% as two or more races, and 2% as White.

This is a living document

Humility and self-reflection are essential to living out our core values. Therefore, we commit to cultivating a willingness to listen, to learn, to be wrong, and to change our minds. For that reason, we see this statement as a living document. We will revisit it frequently to ensure it represents our best thinking on these important topics. We view this process as critical to advancing our mission.