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Report paints profile of Metro Milwaukee's teacher workforce

A report released today by the Milwaukee-based Public Policy Forum shows that the teacher workforce in Greater Milwaukee became less diverse, less experienced, and less educated over a recent five-year period, and has grown smaller overall. However, some of the consequences predicted after the adoption of Wisconsin Act 10 so far have not materialized in the four-county metro region.

"Surprisingly, we found that while 20% of the region's teachers who were over the age of 55 have left the profession in recent years, and while average experience has fallen from 13.5 to 12.7 years, the average age of teachers has stayed exactly the same, at 43 year of age," says Forum Senior Researcher Joe Yeado, the report's lead author. "This would suggest that while school districts may be filling vacancies caused by retirement with less-experienced teachers, they are not necessarily replacing them with 22-year-olds straight out of college."

The report – *Taking Attendance* – is the first in a three-part series looking at teachers and school leaders in Metro Milwaukee. It set out to quantify the number of public school teachers in the four-county Greater Milwaukee region (Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Waukesha, and Washington counties) and to provide insight on their characteristics. Using data collected by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, it identifies a number of trends and patterns in the teacher workforce over a period of time that included the adoption of Act 10. The latest school year for which data were available was 2013-14.

Overall, the analysis finds that the metro region lost 700 teachers between the 2009-10 and 2013-14 school years, a decline of 4.6%. However, the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) lost 730 teachers on its own, meaning school districts in the remainder of the region actually gained 30 teachers during that timeframe.

Another important finding is that the teaching workforce in Metro Milwaukee is predominately white, with minority teachers comprising just 10.9% of educators despite students of color making up 43.9% of enrollments.

"No district in the region has a teacher workforce that matches the ethnic diversity of its students and in most cases, disparities in the level of diversity are substantial," says Yeado. "This pattern affects urban, suburban, and rural districts throughout the region – in fact, 16 districts have no minority teachers at all."

Other key report findings include the following:

- Just 1% of teachers are assigned to English as a Second Language courses, despite English Language Learners comprising 5.3% of enrollments.
- 48.1% of teachers employed by districts in the four-county region had Master's degrees in 2013-14, which is down from 49.6% five years earlier.
- Teacher mobility between districts exists, but of the teachers employed in both 2009-10 and 2013-14, only 6.8% were teaching in a different district, suggesting mobility is not a widespread issue.

"The second report in our series will undertake a similar analysis of principals, superintendents, and other school district leaders in the metro area, while our final report will examine the teacher workforce pipeline to understand if it aligns with the number of teachers who may retire in the near future," says Yeado. "Taken together, this body of research will help to inform school

district leaders, policy stakeholders, and the public, about the people who lead our schools and educate our children."

The full report – which was funded, in part, by grants from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and Northwestern Mutual Foundation – can be downloaded at the Forum's web site,

www.publicpolicyforum.org.

Milwaukee-based Public Policy Forum, established in 1913 as a local government watchdog, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the effectiveness of government and the development of southeastern Wisconsin through objective research of public policy issues.

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