

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, June 29

MacIver Institute Statement on the Resignation of Dr. Demond Means

[Madison, Wis...] Today's sudden resignation of Opportunity Schools commissioner Dr. Demond Means symbolizes the toxic atmosphere that has hindered the critical goal of creating better opportunities for the students trapped in failing Milwaukee schools.

Brett Healy, president of the MacIver Institute, issued the following statement in response to news of Dr. Means' resignation:

"The departure of Dr. Means should be a wake-up call to all of Wisconsin that MPS is utterly unserious about fixing schools that are perpetually failing their students. The childish antics of the MPS board and teachers' union in their attempt to block meaningful reform are frustrating beyond words."

"The people of Wisconsin should be outraged at the political circus that has descended on this very important debate. Rather than come to the table to make meaningful progress, MPS and the union has flipped the table over, opting instead to hold protests and obstruct anyone who is serious about reform."

"In his resignation statement, Dr. Means expressed his frustration over the increasingly adversarial attitudes he encountered and that kids weren't the top priority. We wholeheartedly agree. Rather than working together with the good-faith OSPP effort to give Milwaukee children a better shot at success, MPS and the teachers' union have thrown one temper tantrum after another."

"It is clear that the so-called adults running MPS are unwilling to put the 28,000 children trapped in failing schools in their district above their own interests."

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Next page: Facts about failing Milwaukee schools

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Facts About Failing Milwaukee Schools

- MPS graduates less than 60 percent of students in four years.
- Only a quarter of students are proficient in English.
- Fewer than 17 percent of students are proficient in math.
- During the last Badger Exam, a whopping 53 percent of MPS students scored “below basic” on math.
- The over 33 percent achievement gap in English between white and black students at MPS hurts the children. The over 28 percent achievement gap on math between those same students hurts them.
- More than 70 percent of MPS students lack proficiency in English.
- According to the Department of Public Instruction, 28,000 MPS students attend a school that fails to meet DPI expectations - 37 percent of the entire MPS student population, and larger than the population of Stevens Point.