

Statement of Ald. Ashanti Hamilton January 7, 2010

As the parent of children attending Milwaukee Public Schools at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, today I have grave concerns about their future education and the education of tens of thousands of their peers in MPS.

I've learned that the sponsors of the two pieces of state legislation aimed at reforming how MPS goes about educating my children are not speaking to one another. They're seriously on the "outs" with each other, but our children may end up being the ones hurt the most by their unwillingness to communicate.

It's becoming quite clear that neither proposal – Senate Bill 405 nor the Reforming & Advancing Children's Education for Success Act, or RACE for Success Act – has enough support to move forward in the Legislature. Now, more than ever, Milwaukee parents need the sponsors to work out a balanced compromise plan that gives each side something that it wants. I fear that if this doesn't happen soon, both sides will continue to stonewall and dig in even deeper, making an agreement less and less likely.

Also hanging in the balance are resources -- \$67 million for MPS -- from the federal government in the form of Race to the Top funds. The stalemate in Madison is likely to weaken the state's application for this money, meaning my children could be negatively impacted, losing out on valuable resources meant to help improve education in our city.

Our Milwaukee lawmakers need to end their bickering, put bandages over bruised egos, and come together for the sake of my children, and for the sake of all MPS students. If they can do this, I believe their colleagues in the Legislature will support their compromise.

The time for that compromise is now.

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