



**MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

ESSER III

Extracurricular Engagement Final Report
Performance Period March 13, 2020 - September 30, 2024



Reigniting Student Engagement
with Game-Changing Investments

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The impact of COVID-19 on student engagement was far-reaching, with extracurricular activities – a vital part of student development – completely unavailable. In Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), these activities were put on hold from March 2020 until spring 2021, leaving students without the opportunity to connect socially, pursue interests, or develop important skills.

The **Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund** (ESSER III), part of the federal response to the pandemic, provided an unprecedented opportunity to address the challenges brought on for students. With a focus on **five key priorities – Accelerating Learning, Health and Wellness, Facilities, Technology, and Extracurricular Engagement** – the funding allowed MPS to invest millions in numerous areas including extracurricular opportunities and improving its athletic facilities, which had long been inferior to those of surrounding communities.

By prioritizing extracurricular engagement and athletic facility upgrades, **MPS aimed to reignite student enthusiasm and rebuild pride in the educational experience**. These efforts were designed to help students reconnect, recover socially and emotionally, and get excited about their academic and extracurricular pursuits once again. The ESSER III investment in these areas was a crucial step in re-engaging students and supporting their long-term success, both during and outside of the school day.

The following pages offer a look at the substantial investment made in upgrading district athletic facilities and expanding extracurricular program offerings for students during the ESSER III performance period of March 13, 2020-September 30, 2024.

The success of this initiative would not have been possible without the invaluable support and collaboration of our partners. We are grateful to all who contributed their time, expertise, and resources to bring these projects and efforts to life.

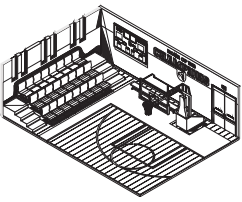


Lynn Greb
Milwaukee Recreation Director
2015-2025

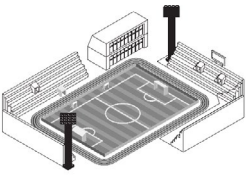
ESSER III EXTRACURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

Total expenditures claimed for Extracurricular Engagement:

\$53,548,829



3
FIELDHOUSE
RENOVATIONS



2
STADIUM
UPGRADES



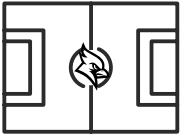
2
TURF
DIAMONDS



10
SWIMMING POOL
RENOVATIONS



7
TENNIS COURT VENUE
UPGRADES



9
UPDATED GYM
FLOORS



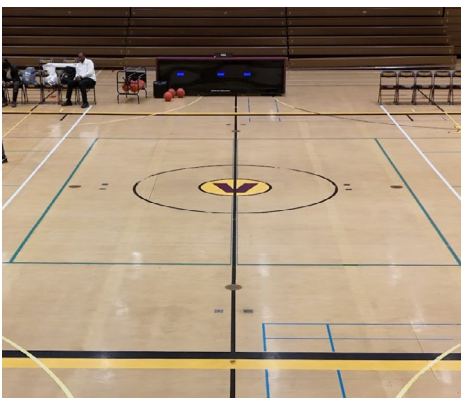
EXTRACURRICULAR
PROGRAM
ENHANCEMENTS



PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

BEFORE THE ATHLETIC FACILITY RENOVATIONS

Prior to the ESSER III funding initiative, many of the district's athletic facilities were aging and in need of improvement. The wear and tear on these spaces made it challenging to provide student-athletes with the best opportunities for success. Funding from ESSER III allowed us to address these deficiencies and bring many of our facilities up to par with neighboring districts, ensuring an improved experience and a greater sense of pride in our school communities.



SOUTH DIVISION FIELDHOUSE



ATHLETIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:



Vibrant school branding



Updated sound system



New wood & rubber flooring



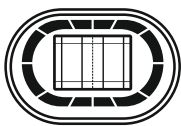
Painted walls & ceiling



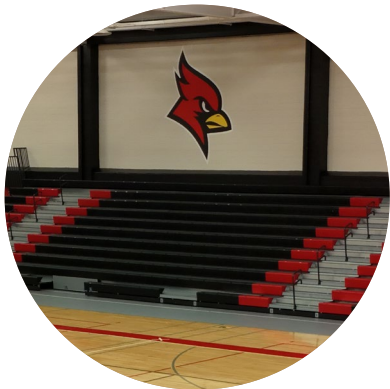
New, motorized bleachers



Improved lighting



New floor striping



The renovation of South Division’s fieldhouse focused on comprehensive improvements to both flooring and facilities. The contractor overlaid the existing sub floor with a new wood main court, surrounded by synthetic poly flooring designed for physical education classes. The facility received new floor striping for both court layouts and physical education activities. A complete aesthetic refresh included painting of the ceiling, interior structure, and upgrades to the lighting system. The existing bleachers were replaced with new motorized units. School branding and a new PA/sound system completed the modernization.

“It really is about investing in our students. Our students really deserve the best facilities that we can provide, and [utilizing] the ESSER funds for that was definitely a step in the right direction for our district. It allows our students to understand that we are investing in them, that we believe in them, and that we support their education here.”

Jose Trejo
South Division High School, Principal



NORTH DIVISION FIELDHOUSE



ATHLETIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:



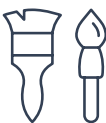
**Vibrant school
branding**



**Updated
sound system**



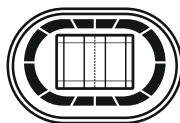
**New wood &
rubber flooring**



**Painted walls
& ceiling**



**New, motorized
bleachers**



**New floor
striping**



North Division’s fieldhouse underwent the same core improvements as South Division, featuring a new wood main court with a synthetic poly flooring perimeter for physical education classes. A complete aesthetic refresh included painting of the ceiling and interior structure. The project included removal of existing bleachers and installation of new motorized units. School branding and a new PA/sound system completed the upgrades.

“We believe that our students deserve the best, and with the new renovations, we are certainly on our way. We are all trying to deliver a reinvigoration of MPS, an investment into MPS, and we’re hoping the energy of the community follows that.”

Derrick Shoates
North Division High School, Athletic Director



VINCENT FIELDHOUSE



ATHLETIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:



Vibrant school branding



Updated sound system



New wood & rubber flooring



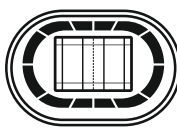
Painted walls & ceiling



New, motorized bleachers



Improved lighting



New floor striping



Vincent's fieldhouse received the same fundamental improvements as North and South Division, including new wood main court flooring with a synthetic poly perimeter. A complete aesthetic refresh included painting of the ceiling, structure, and upgrades to the lighting system. The project included removal of existing bleachers and installation of new motorized units. School branding and a new PA/sound system completed the renovations.

"I do think it is important for MPS students to know that we do have resources available to us to improve our schools. Just seeing our gym get rebuilt is inspiring in itself."

Mei Lan Wang
South Division High School, Student-Athlete



WICK PLAYFIELD DIAMONDS



ATHLETIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:



**Baseball/softball
field renovations
with synthetic turf**



**Restroom
updates**



**Bleachers &
protective
netting**



**New storage
building**



**New field
equipment**



**New
dugouts**



**New LED
lighting system**



**Batting cages &
pitching bays**



The Wick Playfield project encompassed comprehensive improvements to both baseball and softball facilities. Existing grass fields were removed and replaced with synthetic turf, complemented by new foul poles, protective netting, and LED lighting systems. Field equipment upgrades included new bases, pitching mounds, dugouts, bleachers, and batting cages. A new split-face storage building was constructed featuring motorized overhead doors, LED interior lighting, and a shingled roof. Restroom building renovations included ADA improvements to the men’s and women’s restrooms and a new gender-neutral/family bathroom with tiled floors and walls.

“Wick Playfield is one of the largest and most centrally-located athletic facilities in our system. The significant upgrades we’ve made here will benefit student-athletes for years to come.”

Lynn Greb
Director, Milwaukee Recreation, 2015-2025



SWIMMING POOLS



Ten pools received substantial updates, with improvements varying by location. Some pools saw refreshed interiors and updated branding, while others received new seating, starting blocks, and timing systems designed for interscholastic competitions. These upgrades enhanced both the functionality and overall experience of each facility.



MacDowell Montessori School

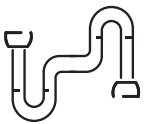


Vincent High School



South Division High School

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:



**New plumbing,
electrical, &
disinfectant systems**



**New
lighting**



**New depth
markers &
safety symbols**



**New
seating**

EQUIPMENT UPGRADES:



Timing Systems



Robotic Pool Vacuums



Starting Blocks

“The new renovations have significantly improved the appearances of our athletic facilities. I believe this will help with student recruitment and positively impact students who are considering trying a new sport.”

Will Landingham Jr.
Hamilton High School, Athletic Director



INDOOR ATHLETIC AMENITIES



ADA chair lifts for accessible pool entry (13 total)

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS & TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES:

Several of the district’s high schools also received equipment and technology upgrades to support their athletic and physical education programs. The number of locations receiving these enhancements is highlighted below.



18
locations received
motorized bleachers



4
locations received
pool fans



19
locations received
sound systems



4
locations received
live streaming camera systems



4
locations received
aquatic timing systems

"I have seen the growth the school has been through, [and] the new gym impacted it a lot. I love it. The floor is not slippery anymore. We got new speakers, so you can hear the music during the games and it really gets the team going."








Johnal Harris
North Division High School, Student-Athlete



CHAMPIONSHIP COURTS



Tennis courts were reconstructed at these schools:

- 
Marshall
- 
Hamilton
- 
Rufus King
- 
North Division
- 
Vincent
- 
Milwaukee High School of the Arts (MHSA)
- 
Milwaukee School of Languages (MSOL)



Gyms floors were redone at these schools:

- 
Bay View
- 
Riverside
- 
Golda Meir Upper
- 
Wisconsin Conservatory of Lifelong Learning (WCLL)
- 
Milwaukee High School of the Arts (MHSA)
- 
Rufus King

STADIUM TURF + UPGRADES



Pulaski Stadium received new visitor and home ticket/concessions buildings constructed with split-face masonry, featuring fiber-reinforced polymer doors, coiling counter windows, and modern amenities including LED lighting and electrical heat. New concrete walkways and modified fencing improved access.

Vincent Stadium's improvements included a new visitor building matching existing stadium architecture, housing a ticket booth, concessions, restrooms, and storage facilities. New home bleachers with a press box were installed on the east side, with enclosed storage spaces underneath. The project included new asphalt pads, walkways, strategic fencing to separate home and visitor traffic, and comprehensive site lighting improvements for enhanced safety and accessibility.

Lastly, the synthetic turf system at Bradley Tech was fully replaced and new bleachers were added.

ATHLETIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:



Vibrant school branding



Improved accessibility



Concession stands



Building repairs & additions



New bleachers



Improved lighting

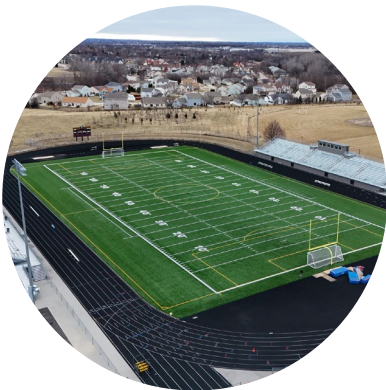


Live streaming cameras



New fencing

UPGRADES:



Vincent Stadium Additional Fencing and Partial Pavement Restoration



Vincent Stadium Press Box & Bleachers



Pulaski Ticket/Concessions Buildings

"I play at different schools outside MPS, and when I go to other schools, I see that they have their own practice facilities, football stadiums, basketball stadiums, and I feel like we deserve stuff like that. Just looking at the gym we had last year and looking at it now, just a huge confidence boost. This is our gym."

Eric Harrison
North Division High School, Student-Athlete



MPS OVERNIGHT CAMP PROGRAM



Scan the QR Code to learn more about MPS Overnight Camp Program

MPS OVERNIGHT CAMP PROGRAM:

The developmental phase from 4th to 8th grade is a crucial and often challenging period for students, characterized by significant physical, emotional, and cognitive changes. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges, limiting opportunities for students to develop and practice essential social-emotional skills due to extended isolation. The MPS Overnight Camp Program offered a structured and nurturing environment where students could forge meaningful relationships with peers and counselors, explore new activities, and engage in personal development. Research consistently highlights the positive effects of overnight camps in enhancing self-confidence, social integration, emotional intelligence (including empathy), and fostering a deep appreciation for nature—all vital components for promoting holistic growth in young learners.

In collaboration with 10 different camps across Wisconsin, the MPS Overnight Camp Program provided students with a wide array of experiences and settings. This partnership ensured that students participated in diverse activities, ranging from outdoor adventures to team-building exercises, cultivating personal growth and strengthening social-emotional skills in a variety of environments.

OUTCOMES:



Thanks to ESSER funding, a total of 706 MPS students attended overnight camp in 2023 and 2024.

Following their camp experience, 75% of the campers who were surveyed reported positive outcomes in each of the following areas: development of friendship skills, affinity for nature, and an affinity for exploration.

"I have seen tremendous growth in my child. He is much more dependable, takes responsibility for his actions, and is much quicker to listen. He is less reactive and has better emotional control than before camp. He is much more independent and has just grown in all aspects over the summer!"

Parent/guardian



EXTRACURRICULAR ENRICHMENT



Saturday Programming

Offered free Saturday programming for elementary students in theater, dance, and enrichment.



Free physicals for sports

1,587 free sports physicals provided to student athletes via a partnership with Concentra Health Services.



Youth Sports vehicle for equipment

Purchased a Ford Transit van to support youth sports league operations for elementary and middle schools.



Pregame study halls for student-athletes

Provided after-school study tables for student athletes.



Life Skills Labs

Constructed two Life Skills Labs to teach essential skills to students, including household management, meal preparation, self-care, etiquette, and personal finance.



MPS Drive

3,606 students participated in driver education with ESSER Funding and 2,681 obtained their permits.



CLCs

Extended Community Learning Center programming into August.



Mini Grants

Provided mini grants to schools for the support of after-school clubs (e.g., Newsletter, Healthy Cooking, Double Dutch, Peace Club, Gardening).



Professional Development

Supported credentialing for Child Care Camp staff to ensure compliance with licensing requirements and enhance program quality.



Transportation

Supported student participation in extracurricular clubs by providing after-school transportation services.

"ESSER III funding allowed us to remove barriers and create opportunities for our students across every aspect of the educational experience. From providing free sports physicals to expanding after-school programs, we've been able to support our students' growth both in and out of the classroom. These investments furthered our commitment to developing well-rounded students and providing them with the tools they need to succeed."

Leighton Cooper
Coordinator, Milwaukee Recreation





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Scan the QR code or follow the link below to watch our short video about the athletic facility upgrades described in this report: mkerec.net/esser.



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS

Acknowledgments:

- MPS Students & Parents
- Community Members
- Milwaukee Board of School Directors
- Milwaukee Public Schools Staff
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Design Teams:

- McEnroe Consulting Engineers
- Quorum Architects, Inc.
- Ramaker and Associates
- Ring & DuChateau
- Sigma Design

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- JCP Construction
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