



Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations

Legislative History:

April 2, 1998: Recommended by the Domestic Public Policy Task Force

April 8, 1998: Recommended by the Executive Committee

April 15, 1998: Adopted by the Board of Directors

Statement of Support for the Milwaukee Minority Ministerial Alliance

The Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations commends the leadership of the Milwaukee Minority Ministerial Alliance for its commitment to reforming the Milwaukee Public Schools into a quality educational system. We applaud the Alliance's demonstrated investment of time and energy in outlining a set of goals, which it believes, are central to improving the quality of education in our city. These goals must be achieved with a commitment from all segments of this community. It will take a collaboration of students, parents, families, teachers, administrators and business, government and religious leaders to make a real difference.

The Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations affirms the Alliance's belief that each child is entitled to higher quality public education. The Council's continuing support of public education is based upon the longstanding conviction that quality public education is vital to preparing young people for full and productive participation in American society. Historically, public education in the United States afforded Jews and other minority groups the foundation for future opportunity. This opportunity must continue to be available for every child. We believe that the educational achievement of each student affects society at large. Therefore, the community as a whole has a responsibility to become involved in ensuring the success of public school students.

The Council is committed to working with those groups and coalitions that demonstrate their desire to address the immediate and pressing concerns of public education in Milwaukee. Therefore we support efforts of the Alliance.

While each of the specific proposals in the Alliance's plan will be subject to discussion, economic realities and ultimately a legislative process, we believe that we share a common goal. The Council supports those aspects of their proposal which reflect the following principles: support parental, family and community involvement, enhanced school governance, development and maintenance of standards, and promote equitable financial support from government and prepare students to learn. We believe that these are incorporated into Alliance goals that would 1) reduce class size, 2) set standards for student promotion, 3) make schools open and accessible to children, families and the community through programs that include summer school and extended hours, 4) comprehensive curriculum and extracurricular activities which address the range of needs and interests of the population, 5) early childhood literacy education, and 6) the resources necessary to address the range of social and economic needs which interfere with the ability of children to learn. Any decisions at the local level to achieve these must not, however, diminish the strict separation of church and state critical to public education.

The Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations is committed to working in partnership with the

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The Interfaith Relations and Public Affairs Agency of Milwaukee's Jewish Community since 1938.

Alliance on mutually shared goals and concerns. As an umbrella organization, with 26 constituent organizations, agencies and synagogues represented on our Board, we can provide access to and a forum for communication in the Jewish community, as well as ongoing opportunities for volunteer involvement and participation in the public schools. We look forward to ongoing dialogue. Together, we hope that we can transform public education in Milwaukee into an example that other communities can emulate.