By Supervisors Bielinski, Martinez, Shea, File No. 24-595

Gómez-Tom, Rolland, O’Connor, and Capriolo

**A RESOLUTION**

Supporting the efforts of the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) District to reconcile and strengthen its financial reporting and accounting practices while calling on the State to adequately fund MPS and other public school systems while retaining a democratically elected local school board to oversee its operations

WHEREAS, recent reports revealed the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) District was delinquent in filing financial reports to the State of Wisconsin, which led to the departure of the District’s Superintendent, Comptroller and Chief Financial Officer, as well as the State temporarily withholding a $16.6 million aid payment; and

WHEREAS, the accounting crisis has led to calls for audits of MPS finances and suggestions by some individuals that the State’s largest school district should be broken up and/or governed by the State or another local government rather than the directly elected MPS School Board; and

WHEREAS, Article X, Section 3 of the Wisconsin Constitution guarantees a tuition-free, uniform public education for every child in the state; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin has a proud history of local control for public schools across the state, though locally elected school boards who are directly accountable to the community, ensuring board members prioritize local needs and preferences; and

WHEREAS, MPS, as a large school district, encompass diverse populations, promoting inclusivity and cross-cultural understanding, which, if fragmented, risks creating groups that reinforce socioeconomic and racial segregation; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee County’s vision is to break down racial silos by achieving racial equity and becoming the healthiest county in the state; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee County also serves and delivers critical services to support the successful education of children who face unique challenges that impact a child’s ability to learn, including housing insecurity, income inequality, and racial segregation; none of which can be fully addressed within the school system; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee Public Schools are filled with talented, caring, and dedicated educators and administrators who suffer from lack of adequate funding and staff to equitably and fully instruct students, many of whom are from vulnerable and marginalized communities themselves; and

WHEREAS, leadership failures by district administration are not the fault of teachers or their students, as funding streams have stagnated since the Wisconsin State Legislature has underfunded public education and, in particular, the MPS District; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby supports Milwaukee Public Schools in its efforts to reconcile and strengthen its financial reporting and accounting practices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Milwaukee County also supports the maintenance of the MPS District and any proposed solutions to the financial difficulties should reflect adequate state funding and the avoidance of unfunded or underfunded mandates to promote academic excellence while ensuring educational consistency, equitable resource distribution, and cultural inclusivity; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Milwaukee County is opposed to any solution which would weaken or dissolve the democratically elected school board members of Milwaukee Public Schools or otherwise ceding governance of public schools to the state, any other level of government, or any private entity as local governance offers direct accountability, adaptability, and community engagement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Office of Government Affairs staff is authorized and requested to distribute this resolution to State policymakers and other stakeholders and support policy solutions which are consistent with the contents of this resolution.