



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

School District of Milton
February 23, 2026

SELECTION PROCESS

The School District of Milton has retained the services of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) to assist the Board with the hiring of the next superintendent. The consultants will screen applications and recommend candidates to the Board for interviews and further consideration. Any questions regarding the application process, selection process, and/or this Leadership Profile Report should be directed to: Mike Richie, HYA Vice President, or Scott Winch, HYA Senior Associate. mikerichie@hyasearch.com / scottwinch@hyasearch.com

PURPOSE

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by HYA during the months of January and February 2026 for the new superintendent of the School District of Milton. The data contained herein was obtained from the input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders.

HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses the skills and character traits required to meet the district's needs. The search team will focus its recruitment on candidates who possess leadership qualities congruent with the profile.

The search team would like to thank the School District of Milton for the opportunity to assist in identifying your next leader, one who reflects the priorities and criteria identified by your stakeholders. HYA also extends its sincere appreciation to everyone who participated in the focus group meetings or completed the online survey, as well as to the District staff who coordinated schedules, invitations, dates, and logistics in support of the data collection for this report.

The overall positivity and engagement of Milton's staff, students, families, and community are truly commendable.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Mike Richie, HYA Vice President
Scott Winch, HYA Senior Consultant

DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT

The School District of Milton, located in south-central Wisconsin, serves nine municipalities spanning across two counties. The District uniquely encompasses both urban and rural communities, with strong connections to both industry and agriculture. Five of Milton's seven schools are located within the City of Milton. Harmony Elementary, serves an area of significant residential growth within the greater community of Janesville and Consolidated Elementary serves the district's rural community. The District's central proximity to major markets and productive work force have made it a dynamic location for economic success in Southern Wisconsin. Milton is only 1.5 hours from Chicago, 30 minutes from Madison, and 1 hour from Milwaukee. Families are drawn to the District for the schools' "small town feel" paired with easy access to urban amenities. Campgrounds, lakes, unique locally owned shops, historic attractions, and beautiful farmland surround the district, while nearby Janesville offers expanded recreation, arts, shopping, and event venues, offering both charm and opportunity. Modern conveniences and a strong sense of community pride come together to create the quality of life that many only dream of.

The School District of Milton has a high school, Milton Achieve program, middle school, intermediate school, four elementary schools, and an early childhood program serving ~3,400 (PK-12) students. The District has 658 employees and a budget of approximately \$64 million.

District Vision Statement: We believe in Opportunities, Achievement, and Community for All.

District Mission: The School District of Milton, in partnership with the community, prepares our students for achievement and lifetime readiness by providing opportunities for all.

The District's Five Strategic Objectives focus on:

- Teaching and Learning
- Relationships, Climate, and Culture
- High Quality Staff
- Community Engagement
- Operations and Facilities

District Highlights:

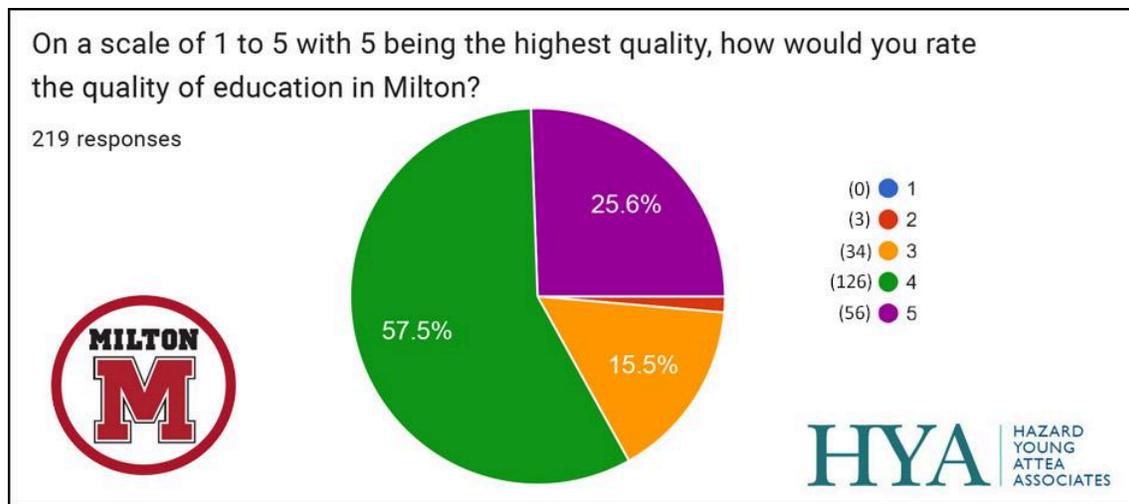
- The School District of Milton is a destination district in southern-Wisconsin, serving a growing community with a rich history, valued traditions, and a forward-thinking approach to education.
- Milton's schools are widely recognized for excellence in academic achievement, commitment to community building, and leadership in school-to-career readiness. Milton's Career Pathways model empowers students to curate their educational experiences to align with their post-graduation goals.
- Deeply rooted community partnerships support learning beyond the classroom, with 100+ local business partnerships and apprenticeship opportunities available to students.
- Rich tradition in the arts, including outstanding choral and instrumental music programs and a comprehensive K-12 visual arts curriculum.
- Sustained community investment in the schools, including a successful recurring operational referendum in November 2024 and a capital referendum in 2019 that expanded classroom space at Milton East, Milton West, Harmony Elementary, and Milton Middle School. The capital referendum also supported the addition of a state-of-the-art STEM wing and field house facilities at Milton High School.

- Strong engagement and pride stretch across generations, with families, students, alumni, and community members deeply engaged with the school system. 90% of families agreed that they were “Proud to be Red Hawks”
- Milton maintains a supportive, student-focused, and mission-driven staff culture. 92% of staff reported they were proud to work for the School District of Milton.

Visit the District Website for more information: [School District of Milton Website](#)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

From February 9 - 13, 2026, an online survey was conducted for all stakeholders. The School District of Milton received 219 responses; of those, a total of 182 respondents (83.1%) rated the quality of education a 4 or 5 out of 5, indicating a strong level of overall satisfaction.



To shape the search for a new superintendent, the HYA Associates gathered valuable insights through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. These efforts aimed to identify the key qualities desired in the next leader while also highlighting the District's strengths and challenges ahead. Common themes voiced by multiple groups were used to build a well-rounded leadership profile, ensuring the selected candidate aligns with the district's needs and vision. It should be emphasized that the data is not a scientific sampling, nor does it necessarily represent the majority opinion of each respective group.

The HYA Associates conducted individual interviews with all seven (7) School Board members, along with eleven (11) focus groups (both in-district and virtual), ensuring that a broad range of perspectives are considered in the superintendent search.

The following questions were asked during each interview and focus group:

1. What are the strengths of the School District of Milton that the next superintendent can build upon?
2. What are the challenges facing the School District of Milton that the next superintendent should be aware of, or that you would like to see addressed?

3. What characteristics or traits are you looking for in your new superintendent?
4. Is there anything else you would like to share with us or that we should know about the School District of Milton?

Through the information gathered, common themes were generated by the respondents. In this report, we will highlight what those themes were as identified by the following groups:

- School Board
- Community/Parents
- Staff
- Students

PROCESS

The structure of the individual meetings and focus groups was open, allowing participants to build upon each other's comments. All of those involved in providing input were asked to respond to the questions on page 4.

PARTICIPATION

Responses were gathered from individual interviews and focus groups. The HYA consultants conducted seven (7) individual interviews and hosted eleven (11) focus groups.

School District of Milton Interviews and Focus Groups
Interviews: School Board Members - 7
Focus Group 1: Business Partners / Chamber - 8
Focus Group 2: 9th and 10th Grade Students - 11
Focus Group 3: 11th and 12th Grade Students - 10
Focus Group 4: Administrators/Directors/AD/Buildings and Grounds - 8
Focus Group 5: Principals - 3
Focus Group 6: Administrative Assistants - 14
Focus Group 7: All School Employees (certified and support staff) - 14
Focus Group 8: Civic Groups / Non-Profits / Foundations - 8
Focus Group 9: Parents and Community Members - 10
Focus Group 10: All School Employees (certified and support staff)
Focus Group 11: Parents and Community Members / Open to anyone in the District

PROFILE DEVELOPMENT & QUALITATIVE DATA

Perceived Strengths • Perceived Challenges • Desired Characteristics

Strengths of the School District of Milton as identified by BOARD OF EDUCATION

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

- 1. Academic Excellence & Student Centered Learning**
High quality teaching and learning, aligned curriculum, strong graduation rates, college and career readiness, and a long standing history of academic excellence.
- 2. Strong Leadership, Staff, and Stability**
Veteran administrative team, dedicated and experienced staff, cohesive board leadership, and continuity that supports consistent, high quality outcomes for students.
- 3. Engaged Community & Financial Strength**
Strong community pride and support, active booster and parent groups, strong reputation as a destination district, sound financial position with a healthy fund balance, and well maintained facilities.

Milton is a high achieving, student centered district defined by strong teaching, stable leadership, and deep community pride. A veteran administrative team, experienced staff, and a cohesive board provide continuity and clarity of purpose, while an aligned curriculum and wide range of academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular opportunities prepare students for college, careers, and life. Financially sound with a strong fund balance and well maintained facilities, the district enjoys broad community support and a reputation as a destination for families, students, and educators, reflecting a shared commitment to excellence and to doing what is best for kids.

Challenges of the School District of Milton as identified by BOARD OF EDUCATION

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

- 1. Financial Pressure & Sustainability**
Ongoing funding constraints driven by state funding limits, rising health care and benefit costs, facilities needs, and the challenge of maintaining high quality education while balancing taxpayer expectations.
- 2. Staffing, Morale & Student Support**
Attracting and retaining high quality staff and administrators, addressing compensation and benefits concerns, supporting staff morale, and meeting increasing student mental health and learning needs.
- 3. Change, Growth & Emerging Issues**
Navigating leadership transition, steady but uncertain enrollment, managing growth while preserving community culture, and responding effectively to AI, cybersecurity, and the evolving nature of education.

The district faces a complex set of challenges centered on financial sustainability, workforce stability, and the changing demands of education. Rising costs, limited state funding, and infrastructure needs place ongoing pressure on resources, even as the district works to remain fiscally responsible. At the same time, increasing student mental health needs, staff morale, and the ability to attract and retain high quality educators require focused attention. Layered onto these realities are leadership transition, growth considerations, and emerging issues such as AI and cybersecurity, making clear communication, stakeholder engagement, and thoughtful long term planning essential moving forward.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Milton Superintendent as identified by SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS	
Clear Vision & Strategic Leadership	Trust, Ethics & High Character
Aligns with district goals, maintains what's working while pursuing innovation, and effectively portrays the district's vision to staff and the community.	Builds and rebuilds trust (especially with teachers), acts with fairness, equity, professionalism, and integrity, and demonstrates strong ethical leadership.
Strong Communication & Active Engagement	People Centered Team Builder
An effective, transparent communicator who listens to all stakeholders, ensures people feel heard, and maintains a visible, approachable public presence.	Values and appreciates staff, builds strong leadership teams, manages people well, fosters a positive culture, and plays to strengths while collaborating with the Board.
Student Focused, Community-Rooted Leader	
Puts students first, has a strong education background, prioritizes equity, is active and visible in the district, and connects authentically with the community (ideally living in the district).	

Strengths of the School District of Milton as identified by PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

1. **Strong Community Pride & Engagement**
Fiercely loyal, highly involved community that shows up for schools, supports referendums, partners with the district, and takes pride in being part of Milton.
2. **Caring, Committed Staff & Inclusive Culture**
Dedicated teachers and administrators who genuinely care about students, build strong relationships, support students beyond the classroom, and foster an inclusive, family-like environment.
3. **Well Rounded Opportunities & Stability**
Financially stable district with well-maintained facilities, strong academics, diverse course offerings, trades, electives, scholarships, travel opportunities, and a "small town feel with big district opportunities."

Milton is widely viewed as a fabulous district where people often don't realize how strong it truly is. A deeply engaged and loyal community, combined with caring, committed staff, creates a family-like culture centered on doing what's best for students. The district offers well rounded opportunities through strong academics, inclusive programming, and a wide variety of courses and experiences, all supported by financial stability and well maintained facilities. With a strong reputation and community support, Milton continues to be a destination district for families, students, and educators alike.

Challenges of the School District of Milton as identified by PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

1. **Managing Growth While Preserving Community Identity**
Balancing enrollment growth, facilities capacity, and geographic size with the community's desire to maintain a small district feel and thoughtful, sustainable expansion.
2. **Funding, Staffing & Resource Constraints**
Limited state funding, the need to invest proactively in facilities and programs, competitive salaries and benefits to attract and retain staff, and ongoing operational costs such as maintenance and SPED services.
3. **Communication, Technology & Equity Needs**
Improving communication and user friendly systems, strengthening digital infrastructure, addressing AI and cybersecurity responsibly, and continuing efforts to increase diversity and inclusion.

The district faces important challenges tied to growth, resources, and modernization. As enrollment pressures increase across a large geographic area, the district must balance facility capacity and staffing needs while preserving the small town culture valued by the community. At the same time, constrained state funding and rising costs require clear communication to build support for continued investment in the future. Strengthening communication, responsibly leveraging AI, protecting against cyber threats, and advancing diversity and inclusion will be essential to ensuring sustainable growth and long-term success.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Milton Superintendent as identified by PARENTS and COMMUNITY MEMBERS	
Transparent, High Integrity Leader	Strong Communicator & Relationship Builder
Demonstrates honesty, integrity, and strong character in all interactions, builds public trust through transparency, and acts ethically when engaging with the community.	Communicates clearly with all stakeholders, is approachable and personable, collaborates with city and civic leaders, and advocates effectively for public education.

Visible, Community Engaged Presence	Innovative, Responsible Problem Solver
Lives in the district, prioritizes time in schools and the community, attends events, and remains accessible and available to staff, students, and families.	Shows courage to lead, applies creative and forward thinking solutions, manages fiscal responsibilities wisely, and draws on proven past achievements to address challenges.
Experienced, Student-Centered Educator	
Brings meaningful classroom and educational leadership experience, understands district demographics, genuinely likes kids, and demonstrates empathy while maintaining leadership resolve.	

**Strengths of the School District of Milton as identified by
STAFF**

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

1. **High Achievement & Educational Quality**
Strong academic performance with the highest test scores in Rock County, high standards, student driven decision making, and robust SPED programming supported by strong professional development.
2. **Dedicated Staff, Leadership & Stability**
Invested, high quality staff who choose to stay, stable and supportive leadership and board governance, and a strong culture where educators, students, and families want to be.
3. **Community Pride, Support & Financial Strength**
Deep community ties, strong parent involvement, a positive regional reputation, sound financial position with clean audits and a successful 2024 operational referendum, and a true small town feel with big district opportunities.

The district’s greatest strengths lie in its academic excellence, committed people, and strong sense of community. High achievement, diverse course and co-curricular offerings, and student centered decision making are supported by quality staff, stable leadership, and a culture that encourages educators to stay and invest long-term. Backed by strong community pride, financial stability, and broad support for education, Milton is widely viewed as a destination district, one where families move for the schools and where students and staff are proud to belong.

**Challenges of the School District of Milton as identified by
STAFF**

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

1. **Growth, Capacity & Community Tension**
Managing rapid growth driven by housing development while addressing space constraints, class sizes, busing, and maintaining community cohesion across a large, multi-county district with differing perspectives on change.

2. Financial, Staffing & Policy Pressures

Rising costs (especially health insurance), teacher shortages, compensation inequities, SPED growth, unfunded mandates, and the challenge of sustaining programs with limited funding and referendum uncertainty.

3. Equity, Communication & System Readiness

Advancing equity and inclusion amid differing community values, addressing mental health and student behavior needs, improving communication, systems, and data use, and navigating AI, policy, and 21st century learning expectations.

The district faces increasing pressure from growth, financial constraints, and evolving expectations in education. Rapid expansion and space limitations strain facilities, staffing, and transportation, while a frugal community and referendum concerns complicate funding decisions. At the same time, rising health care costs, teacher shortages, SPED demands, and unfunded mandates add to operational challenges. Successfully navigating these issues will require strong communication, improved systems and data use, attention to staff and student well-being, and a clear commitment to equity, inclusion, and the district’s mission as it prepares for the future.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Milton Superintendent as identified by SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MILTON STAFF	
Consistent, Steady Leadership	Strong Communicator & Trusted Connector
Provides predictability and stability, leads with calm confidence, avoids unnecessary change, and demonstrates a long-term commitment to the district.	Communicates clearly and transparently, listens well, serves as an effective conduit between the board and administration/staff, and balances the needs of all stakeholders.
Student Focused, Data Driven Educational Leader	People Centered Servant Leader with Accountability
Makes student centered decisions grounded in data, understands curriculum and assessment, supports achievement and inclusion for all students, and brings prior principal level experience.	Trusts and empowers staff without micromanaging, recognizes strengths, supports professional autonomy, and holds individuals accountable with a firm but fair backbone.
Visible, Ethical Champion for the District	
Maintains a strong presence in buildings and the community, engages with staff, students, and families, upholds high ethical standards, and serves as a proud, visible face of the district.	

Strengths of the School District of Milton as identified by HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

- 1. Strong Community Support & School Pride**
Deep community involvement, financial and volunteer support, and a shared sense of Milton pride where families and schools show up for one another.
- 2. Caring, High Quality Teachers**
Dedicated teachers who build strong relationships with students, are accessible and supportive, and genuinely care about student success and well-being.
- 3. Student Engagement & Broad Opportunities**
Wide range of clubs, sports, leadership activities, and course offerings that engage students at all levels and provide meaningful opportunities for participation and growth.

The district benefits from strong community support and pride, with families and schools working together to support students and one another. High quality, caring teachers play a central role by building strong connections with students and being readily available when help is needed. Combined with a wide range of academic, extracurricular, and leadership opportunities, the district creates an engaging, supportive environment where students are encouraged to participate, grow, and succeed.

Challenges of the School District of Milton as identified by STUDENTS

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

- 1. Academic Readiness & Course Options**
Concerns about preparation for high school, grading practices, and the desire for expanded course offerings, including dual enrollment, weighted grades, and additional math and arts-focused classes.
- 2. Communication, Voice & Recognition**
Unclear communication about where to go with questions or concerns, when students can speak up, and a desire for more consistent recognition of achievements and contributions.
- 3. Inclusion, Diversity & School Climate**
A need for greater diversity, stronger inclusion efforts, and a more respectful, supportive environment where all students feel valued and cared for.

Students shared concerns about academic preparedness, particularly around grading practices and the transition into high school, along with interest in broader and more flexible course options. Clearer communication and opportunities for student voice would help students feel more confident navigating the system and being heard. Additionally, students emphasized the importance of diversity, inclusion, and a positive school climate where everyone feels respected and recognized for their achievements and contributions.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Milton Superintendent as identified by SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MILTON STUDENTS	
Visible, Hands-On Presence in Schools	Student Centered Listener & Communicator
Regularly visits classrooms, knows what's happening day to day, and shows genuine interest in students and staff.	Actively listens to student feedback, responds thoughtfully, and communicates in ways students feel heard and valued.
Strong Community Connection	Respect for District Culture & Pride
Lives in or near the district, understands the geography and logistics of a large district, and is visible at school and community activities.	Appreciates the pride people have in their schools and honors the community's identity while building relationships.
Commitment to Continuous Improvement	
Strives to make the school better through thoughtful leadership, responsiveness, and steady involvement.	

FINDINGS / THEMES

Many of the discussions pertaining to strengths and challenges for the School District of Milton flow into the expectations for the next superintendent. Several of the characteristics that are present in the profile for the next superintendent build on the current strengths of the organization in addition to addressing the challenges ahead. The search team will seek a new superintendent who will understand issues facing the district.

When the data from interviews and focus groups were combined, themes emerged. It should be noted that there was more similarity across groups than there were differences. In general, strengths and challenging issues were almost unanimous across groups. Additionally, the characteristics desired in the next superintendent were also closely aligned across groups. This congruence is viewed as a positive characteristic of this search and will bring clarity in focus for the Board and the new superintendent.

The following themes are supported by the combined data.

STRENGTHS

- High Student Achievement & Quality Teaching**
 History of academic excellence, high graduation rates, strong test scores, aligned curriculum, and high-quality teaching and learning across the district.
- Exceptional Staff & Leadership Stability**
 Dedicated, experienced teachers and administrators who care deeply about students, build strong relationships, stay long-term, and provide steady, effective leadership.

- **Strong Community Support & Pride**
Fiercely loyal, engaged community with strong parent involvement, booster clubs, partnerships, and pride in being part of Milton—people move here for the schools.
- **Financial Strength & Well-Maintained Facilities**
Financially sound district with clean audits, strong fund balance (20–25%), successful referendums, and facilities that are well cared for and in great shape.
- **Wide-Ranging Opportunities for Students**
Well-rounded offerings including academics, electives, trades, co-curriculars, athletics, travel opportunities, strong SPED programming, scholarships, and college/career readiness—small-town feel with big-district opportunities.

CHALLENGES

- **Financial Sustainability & State Funding Constraints**
Ongoing funding challenges driven by limited state support, rising costs (especially health insurance and benefits), unfunded mandates, concerns about future referendums, and the need to balance high-quality education with taxpayer expectations.
- **Attracting, Retaining, and Supporting Staff**
Competitive salaries and benefits, staff morale, teacher shortages, compensation inequities, professional development needs, and increasing mental health demands for both staff and students.
- **Managing Growth While Preserving District Culture**
Enrollment growth tied to housing development, space and class-size pressures, facilities needs, transportation and busing complexity across a large geographic area, and balancing expansion with the community’s small-district identity.
- **Evolving Student Needs & Equity Expectations**
Rising mental health needs, increased SPED demands and caps, behavioral expectations, inclusion and diversity concerns, equity versus equality tensions, and ensuring all students feel supported and prepared for postsecondary success.
- **Communication, Change, and 21st-Century Challenges**
Navigating leadership transitions, improving transparency and communication, strengthening systems and processes, addressing AI, cybersecurity, and policy mandates (Title IX/VI), and guiding the district through the changing nature of education.

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

1. **Visible, Accessible, Community-Engaged Leader**
Maintains a strong presence in schools and the community, regularly visits classrooms, attends events, understands district geography and culture, and builds authentic relationships (ideally living in or near the district).
2. **Strong, Transparent Communicator & Listener**
Communicates clearly and consistently with all stakeholders, listens actively—especially to students and staff—ensures people feel heard, and serves as an effective conduit between the board, administration, and community.

3. **High Character, Trust, and Ethical Leadership**
Leads with integrity, fairness, and professionalism; rebuilds and sustains trust; demonstrates transparency in decision-making; and serves as a credible, ethical face of the district.
4. **Student-Centered Educational Leader**
Puts students first in all decisions, brings meaningful classroom and leadership experience, understands curriculum, assessment, and data, and is committed to achievement, inclusion, and equity for every student.
5. **People-Centered Team Builder with Accountability**
Values and supports staff, fosters a positive culture, empowers without micromanaging, recognizes strengths, builds strong leadership teams, and holds individuals accountable with empathy and clarity.
6. **Consistent, Steady Leadership with a Clear Vision**
Provides stability and predictability, aligns with district goals, honors what is working, avoids unnecessary disruption, and articulates a clear plan to move the district forward over the long term.
7. **Innovative, Responsible Problem Solver**
Demonstrates courage to lead, applies thoughtful innovation, manages resources responsibly, collaborates with civic partners, and addresses challenges using data and past experience.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF MILTON SUPERINTENDENT DESIRED CANDIDATE PROFILE

The School District of Milton seeks a superintendent who in collaboration with the Board, staff, students, parents and community, will focus the district on shared goals and vision. After seeking input from stakeholders through individual and group interviews, focus groups, and a survey, the School District of Milton seeks an engaged, visionary superintendent who possesses the following characteristics:

Visible, Student-Centered Community Leader

Maintains a strong presence in schools and the broader community, builds authentic relationships, and keeps students at the center of every decision while understanding curriculum, instruction, and achievement

Transparent Communicator and Trusted Ethical Leader

Leads with integrity and professionalism, communicates clearly and consistently, listens actively to all stakeholders, and fosters trust through transparency and fairness in decision-making.

People Focused Team Builder with Accountability

Supports and empowers staff, builds strong leadership teams, cultivates a positive culture, and balances empathy with clear expectations and accountability.

Steady, Visionary Problem Solver

Provides consistent, stable leadership with a clear long-term vision, honors what is working, applies thoughtful innovation, and responsibly manages resources to move the district forward.

BULLETED NOTES FROM ALL GROUPS

The interviews and focus groups of stakeholders generated the following responses. Careful attention has been made to accurately convey the message. The comments listed below emerged from statements made by stakeholders and they are to be considered personal opinions of the individual making the comments regarding the School District of Milton.

School Board Members

What are the strengths of the School District of Milton?

- High quality teaching and learning
- High quality admin team
- Aligned curriculum
- Engaged community
- Student Centered
- Financially stable
- High achieving district
- Awards for extra-curricular activities
- Strong administrative team
- Community support
- Well rounded
- Staff
- High achievement
- Active community - booster clubs, parent groups
- Opportunities for kids - ACP for high school
- Financially sound
- Buildings are in great shape
- Strong admin team
- Pride in being from Milton
- Graduation rate
- Staff
- Community
- Fiscally sound
- Board continuity
- Veteran administrative team
- Student achievement
- Opportunities provided to students, co-curricular, sports, academic
- Financial strength of the district
- Fund balance 20-25%
- Community support of the district
- History of Academic excellence
- High Graduation rate

- High achievement compared to neighboring schools
- College and career readiness
- Fiscally sound
- Variety of extracurricular activities
- Destination district for students and staff
- Leadership in the district
- Reputation of the district is very good
- Destination district
- Teachers/administrators who have been in the district for a long time
- Cohesive board
- Everyone's heart is in the right place

School Board Members

What are the challenges of the School District of Milton?

- Financial constraints, funding
- Take care of staff
- Retaining staff
- Approved operational referendum
- Increasing student needs
- Stable for 5-7 years, benefits are concerning
- Attract quality staff and administrators
- Balance the growth with the culture of the city
- Attract and retain quality staff
- State funding
- Enrollment, steady but still concerned
- Concern about AI and its impact on learning
- Staff morale
- Health care costs
- Funding
- Changing of the superintendent
- Mental Health issues
- Proper use of AI
- Cybersecurity
- Political unrest
- Changing nature of education
- Engage all stakeholders
- Finances are always a challenge
- High quality education vs interests of taxpayers
- Maintain enrollment
- Teacher pay and benefits
- Rising cost of health insurance
- Facilities could be upgraded - invest in the infrastructure of the district
- Keep the cohesion on the board
- Keep high quality staff
- Mental health issues of students

Parents and Community Members

What are the strengths of the School District of Milton?

- Fabulous district
- When it's good, you don't realize how good you have it
- Community involvement
- Financially stable
- People look for homes here, want this school district
- Wonderful resources for students
- Genuine care and concern for students
- School feels like a big family
- School is involved in the entire community, involved in community events
- Teachers support students at outside events
- District does a good job of retaining teachers
- Community is fiercely loyal to the district
- Graduating students who go into education want to come back to teach here
- Staff members are a great staff
- Staff cares about the children
- Good administrators
- Education is inclusive for all students
- Involved in community activities
- Opportunities for all students
- Perfect size district, small town feel but big enough to offer opportunities for students
- Great community support, recurring referendum passed in 2024
- Travel opportunities for students
- Elective course offerings, great variety
- Strong local scholarship program
- Staff is very good
- Communication with the parents
- Big school in a small community
- Community is willing to support and give to the school
- Partnerships with outside organizations/businesses
- High school offerings and flexibility for students
- MRec programming
- District has a good reputation
- Variety of course offerings
- Trades are strong
- Students are great
- Strong community feel
- Facilities are in good shape, well cared for
- Strong Literacy Program
- Good job managing the finance
- Lots of promotion from within the District

Parents and Community Members

What are the challenges of the School District of Milton?

- Growth is concerning
- Convincing the community that we need to invest in the district, things are good, but we need to meet the challenges of the future
- Portion of the community that doesn't want the community to grow
- Competitive salaries and benefits
- Size of the district, area 100 square miles
- 75% of students live outside the city of Milton
- Don't grow too fast, like the small district feel
- Pool maintenance
- SPED caps for Open enrollment
- Funding
- State funding
- Growth is concerning, do we have the room
- Attract and retain quality staff
- Lack of diversity
- School district website could be more user friendly
- Better communication
- Dealing with AI and using it productively
- Careful of cyberattacks
- Socially managing the curriculum will be a challenge

School District Staff

What are the strengths of the School District of Milton?

- Strong community ties
- Strong achievement
- Support across the district
- Staff likes working in the district and typically stay
- People care about the students and their activities
- Destination district, people want to be here
- Special Education program is strong
- Communication and social media presence
- Pride in the district
- Quality staff who are invested in the district
- Strong financial position
- 2024 Operational Referendum
- Clean audits
- Small district feel with big district opportunities
- Test scores are the highest in Rock County
- Stability of leadership
- School pride is strong
- Parent involvement and support
- Destination district, people want to have their kids come to school here
- Strong leadership team
- PD offerings for staff
- SPED department is strong

- Sense of community, we care about the school and community
- Student driven decision making
- Small town feel with the benefits of a big district
- Communication and use of social media
- Community support
- Everyone rallies around each other in support
- Staff choose to live in district and kids come to school here
- Staff are invested and attend many activities
- Value education in the district
- Community supports the teachers
- Good tie between businesses and the district
- District has a strong reputation in the region
- Staff retention is good
- Course offerings
- Club and sport offerings
- Travel opportunities
- People move here for the schools
- Supportive school board, even keeled
- High academic standards
- High achievement
- Community support
- Milton Pride
- A school that students and staff want to be in
- Dedicated Staff
- Opportunities for all
- Strong sense of community

School District Staff

What are the challenges of the School District of Milton?

- Growing beyond the comfort level
- Xenophobia
- Long standing ideals in the community
- Need to earn the loyalty of the community
- District is in three counties and nine municipalities
- Frugal community, tough to pass referendums
- Bare bones budget, fundraising is a must to meet all the needs
- Health insurance rates, last three years there was a 10% increase
- Title IX
- Title VI
- Teacher shortage
- Mental health issues in staff and students
- SPED needs increased
- Unfunded mandate
- Professional development of staff
- Continue of 21st century learning

- Policy challenges
- AI
- Growth and ability to handle it
- Stick with vision and mission, equity for all students
- Busing
- Space is tight, Northside
- Class sizes due to growth
- Staffing, attract and retain staff
- Concern about another referendum
- Financial concerns, not as much coming in as other conference schools
- Housing boom, growth for the district
- Compensation model, people with less experience come in and make more than seasoned teachers
- Communication between the buildings could be better
- Systems and processes in the district
- We know data needs to be fixed, give us the tools to make it better
- Equity vs equality
- Listen to the staff more
- Some concerns with student behavior and expectations
- Tell us why decisions are made
- Transparency
- Difference in the rural area of the district and the Janesville area of the district, some want to grow, and some want to stay the same
- Poor balancing act in serving all stakeholders in the district, good at the building level but needs to improve at the district level
- Would be nice as a new teacher to know the teaching philosophy of the district vs the building, what is the district vision?
- Starting pay is great but there is stagnation in the pay scale with years of experience, and tend to fall behind other districts with more experience
- Staff can get put off by the district saying "you need to talk to so and so about that". Want to follow the chain of command but not sure what that is

High School Students

What are the strengths of the School District of Milton?

- Community support
- Clubs and sports to be involved in
- Pride in the school
- Resources for kids that need help
- Students are involved in the elementary
- Get other schools involved in the activities
- Student leadership activities
- Teachers are really good
- Teachers build a connection with students
- Teachers care about the students
- Community support

- Financial support from the community
- We show up to help others, work together to help those in need
- Teachers do a great job of interacting with students
- Teachers are available to help when needed
- Good options for courses - health, shop, etc.
- Milton pride, all schools participate in activities
- Great opportunities for students, sports, and others

High School Students

What are the challenges of the School District of Milton?

- No letter grades in middle school, felt unprepared for high school
- Communication - some don't know when they can speak or where to go
- Wish there were more diversity in the school
- High school can be challenging
- People don't always care about others' feelings
- More dual enrollment courses
- Wish we had weighted grades
- Offer more English type courses
- More math classes
- Be more inclusive, find a way to have everyone feel included
- More ways to recognize achievements and donations

APPENDIX

The APPENDIX pages of this proposal include the following documents:

1. Milton Online Survey Response Summary
2. School District of Milton Data Briefs - 2024-2025 Wisconsin State Report Card Analysis

ONLINE SURVEY QUESTION SUMMARY

As part of the engagement process, stakeholders were invited to participate in an online survey open from February 2–13, 2026. A total of 219 responses were received, with the majority coming from parents or guardians, and certified staff (teachers and administrators), who accounted for 188 responses (85.8%).

1. What are the School District of Milton's strengths that the next superintendent can build upon?

- **Dedicated Staff and Teachers:** A strong foundation exists with dedicated, experienced, and high-quality staff and teachers who truly care about students,

actively work to support each other and students, and go above and beyond expectations. Staff retention is an important focus.

- **Strong Community Connection and Support:** The district benefits from a supportive, involved, and tight-knit community that partners with the schools, values education, and shows great pride in the district. This includes support for referendums and coming together in times of need.
- **Variety of Student Opportunities:** The district offers a wide range of opportunities including strong academic programs, a variety of class offerings at the high school (e.g., AP, college-prep, STEM, Comp Sci, career/technical programs), and strong extracurricular activities (athletics, music/arts, clubs, organizations).
- **Positive Reputation and Culture:** The district has a reputation for high achievement, inclusivity, success, and maintains a small-town feel despite its size, fostering a positive, student-centered culture.
- **Effective Communication and Engagement:** Strengths include effective communication, transparency (when present), and family/parent involvement, which the next superintendent should continue to nurture and strengthen.

2. What are the challenges facing the School District of Milton that the next superintendent should be aware of, or you would like to see addressed?

- **Staffing and Compensation:** There are significant challenges with teacher and staff retention and compensation, with many advocating for increased salaries that are competitive with neighboring districts and address the rising cost of living. Several responses specifically request a change to a 24-pay period system for teachers.
- **Student Behavior, Discipline, and Safety:** Bullying is a major concern across the district, particularly at the middle school level, with many feeling that disciplinary policies are not adequately enforced or that students lack accountability. Concerns about child safety, mental health support, and addressing disruptive/aggressive behaviors are also highlighted.
- **Curriculum and Academic Standards:** There is a desire for increased academic rigor, especially for advanced students, and consistency in curriculum across all schools. A significant number of responses express concern about the lack of traditional letter grades until high school, suggesting they should start in middle school or earlier.
- **Facilities and Growth Management:** The district faces challenges related to rapid community growth, resulting in larger class sizes and potential overcrowding. There are concerns about the need for continued building maintenance, updates, and the difficulty of passing referendums for necessary facility expansions.
- **Communication, Transparency, and Community Relations:** Respondents noted a disconnect and lack of transparent communication between the administrative offices, school board, staff, and the community, particularly regarding funding, budget

spending, and decision-making processes like the movement of open enrollment students.

3. What are the characteristics or traits that you think an effective Superintendent should possess in order to best lead the School District of Milton?

- **Communication and Transparency:** The superintendent must be a strong, clear, and open communicator with staff, students, parents, and the community. This includes being visible, approachable, and transparent about decisions, financials, and the 'why' behind them.
- **Leadership and Vision:** An effective leader is expected to be decisive, forward-thinking, organized, and focused on the big picture, with a commitment to the long-term betterment of students and the district. They should lead by example and be willing to take accountability.
- **Staff and Student Focus:** Key traits include supporting staff, listening to their concerns, providing them with a voice, and prioritizing student outcomes, education, and well-being over other interests or political fads.
- **Community Involvement and Approachability:** The superintendent should be visible, involved in the community, able to build relationships, and approachable to all demographics—staff, students, and community members alike.
- **Problem-Solving and Fiscal Responsibility:** Respondents desire a problem-solver who is level-headed, understands financial management, and is fiscally responsible with taxpayer money.

4. Is there anything about the search or superintendent position that you would like to share with us?

- **Need for Community-Focused and Visible Leadership:** A strong preference was expressed for a new superintendent who will be visible, approachable, and engaged with the community, staff, and students, building trust that has been broken. Several responses suggest the superintendent should live in the district.
- **Concerns about District Finances and Accountability:** Multiple respondents requested more oversight, accountability, and transparency regarding the budget, especially the use of referendum money and the high cost of team programs. There were also concerns about increasing taxes and the fairness of the salary schedule for long-tenured staff.
- **Desire for New Perspectives vs. Internal Candidates:** There's a divide on hiring strategy; some strongly advocate for hiring from within the district or considering current staff members (mentioning Jeremy Billhorn and Jennifer Cramer), while others urge the board to hire an external candidate to bring "fresh perspective" and challenge existing norms.

- **Teacher/Staff Support and Morale:** Respondents highlighted the need for more support for teachers, addressing low staff morale, and valuing educators by providing adequate compensation, flexible professional development, and a non-authoritarian leadership structure.
- **Focus on Academics and Student Well-being:** Emphasized a priority on high-level education, core academics (Math, English, Science, History), life skills, and trade school options, while keeping politics/ideologies out of schools. Calls were made for addressing the learning gap post-COVID, offering options for struggling students, and improving school food choices.
- **Facility and Operational Requests:** Specific requests include installing air conditioning in elementary schools (Milton West), increasing community access to the High School pool, and improving the process for guest teaching.



2024-2025
Wisconsin
State Report Card Analysis

State Percentile Analysis

Milton

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to examine how Milton compared to other Wisconsin districts during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. Percentiles are used to indicate where Milton falls in the distribution of school districts across the state of Wisconsin on a wide variety of metrics related to student achievement, target group performance, financial information, student demographics, and general district characteristics.

Methods

Data were collected across the five areas listed below from the Wisconsin Report Card website (<https://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/reportcards/>) :

<u>Student Achievement</u>	<u>Target Group Performance</u>	<u>Financial Information*</u>	<u>Student Demographics</u>	<u>District Characteristics</u>
Proficiency – ELA & Math	Target Group Outcomes Score	Total Education Cost Per Student	Economically Disadvantaged	Enrollment
Achievement Score – ELA & Math	Target Group Achievement Score	Instructional Expenditures Per Student	English Learners (EL)	Student to Staff Ratios
Growth Score – ELA & Math	Target Group Growth Score	Percent Revenue from Property Tax	Disabilities	Graduation/Attendance
3rd Grade ELA Achievement Score	Target Group Chronic Absenteeism	Teacher Average Salary and Fringe	Ethnicity	Mobility
8th Grade Math Achievement Score	Target Group Graduation/Attendance	Teacher Average Experience		Chronic Absenteeism
On-Track to Graduate				

Percentiles were calculated by ranking all Wisconsin districts who had data on the particular metric appearing in the state report card. A percentile of 50 would indicate that a district had an indicator value that was the same or higher than 50% of districts across Wisconsin. A percentile of 99 would indicate that a district had an indicator value that was the same or higher than 99% of districts across Wisconsin. Note that it may not be desirable to have high percentile rankings for all indicators. For example, it may be preferable to have an average or lower percentile ranking for metrics such as student to staff ratios or between district mobility (the percent of students not present for the full academic year).

Tables 1-5 display the values corresponding to the state 50th percentile, the district values, and the district percentile rankings within the state of Wisconsin for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. Note that the state value is the 50th percentile value across all districts in the state. The change in the value and percentile between these two school years is also reported. Figures 1 and 2 visualize the shift in the state's distribution of ELA and Math proficiency from the Spring of 2024 to the Spring of 2025. The vertical lines represent the District proficiency in the Spring of 2024 and the Spring of 2025. Figures 3 and 4 show the percentage of students designated as economically disadvantaged against the percentage of all students meeting ELA and Math proficiency across the district in the spring of 2025.

*Financial expenditure and revenue data reported is from the previous school year.

Table 1. Student Performance

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
ELA Proficiency	52.5%	57.4%	71	52.5%	60.0%	76	2.6%	+5
Math Proficiency	55.4%	61.5%	71	55.3%	64.0%	77	2.5%	+6
Achievement Score	61.6	68.9	76	67.3	75.1	76	+6.2	0
ELA Achievement Score	62.2	68.3	75	66.1	72.1	75	+3.8	0
Math Achievement Score	61.1	69.4	74	69.6	78.0	77	+8.6	+3
Growth Score	64.1	58.4	27	63.2	59.4	33	+1.0	+6
ELA Growth Score	64.1	58.4	32	62.2	58.4	32	0.0	0
Math Growth Score	64.1	58.4	24	64.1	60.3	35	+1.9	+11
3rd Grade ELA Achievement Score	63.4	68.6	71	69.5	78.2	79	+9.6	+8
8th Grade Mathematics Achievement Score	58.8	65.1	65	73.5	78.5	62	+13.4	-3
On-Track to Graduation Score	85.6	89.0	79	87.4	90.7	76	+1.7	-3

Notes:

Table 2. Target Group Performance

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Target Group Outcomes Score	58.7	50.6	16	64.8	62.7	39	+12.1	+23
Target Group Achievement Score	21.9	22.5	54	30.6	33.7	62	+11.2	+8
Target Group Growth Score	63.2	52.7	6	63.2	58.4	27	+5.7	+21
Target Group Chronic Absenteeism Score	79.5	81.9	60	80.2	80.4	52	-1.5	-8
Target Group Graduation/ Attendance Score	94.2	95.3	59	94.0	96.4	75	+1.1	+16

Notes:

Table 3. Financial Information

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Total Current Education Cost per Student (TCEC)	\$ 13,849	\$ 12,375	16	\$ 14,514	\$ 12,378	6	+\$ 3	-10
Instructional Expenditures Per Student	\$ 8,697	\$ 7,988	25	\$ 9,161	\$ 7,810	7	-\$ -178	-18
Percent Revenue from Property Tax	34.8%	38.2%	61	36.1%	39.7%	60	1.4%	-1
Teacher Average Salary	\$ 58,571	\$ 62,613	76	\$ 60,219	\$ 64,362	73	+\$ 1,749	-3
Teacher Average Salary Plus Fringe	\$ 83,866	\$ 86,445	62	\$ 86,181	\$ 90,132	65	+\$ 3,687	+3
Teacher Average Total Experience	14.4	14.7	57	14.5	15.2	67	+0.5	+10

Notes:

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Table 4. Student Demographics

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Economically Disadvantaged	41.2%	24.7%	16	38.2%	22.9%	17	-1.8%	+1
English Learner (EL)	1.8%	1.9%	52	2.1%	1.9%	47	0.0%	-5
Disabilities	15.4%	13.2%	25	16.0%	13.1%	19	-0.1%	-6
Asian	0.6%	1.3%	73	0.7%	1.4%	73	0.1%	0
Black	0.8%	1.3%	68	0.8%	1.3%	68	0.0%	0
Hispanic	6.1%	6.0%	49	6.3%	6.2%	48	0.2%	-1
White	86.5%	88.1%	57	86.0%	87.9%	57	-0.2%	0
Two More Races	3.6%	3.2%	42	3.7%	3.0%	35	-0.2%	-7

Notes:

Table 5. District Characteristics

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Enrollment	955	3,451	85	965	3,461	86	+10	+1
Ratio of Students to Staff - Licensed Staff	11.3	13.7	95	11.3	13.7	95	+0.0	0
Ratio of Students to Staff - Total FTE	6.8	7.8	79	6.8	7.9	82	+0.1	+3
Graduation/Attendance Score	96.0	98.1	77	95.9	98.2	78	+0.1	+1
Between District Mobility	3.3%	2.8%	38	3.2%	3.0%	46	0.2%	+8
Chronic Absenteeism Rate Score	87.0	90.9	73	87.3	89.4	66	-1.5	-7

Notes:

The graphs below illustrate the percentage of students meeting proficiency standards for all subjects in each school district across Wisconsin. The distributions of these percentages in 2024 and 2025 are captured under the grey and purple curves respectively. The state median is noted for each year as well. The vertical lines illustrate the percentage of students meeting proficiency each year in your district.

Figure 1. Proficiency Distribution of Wisconsin Districts - ELA

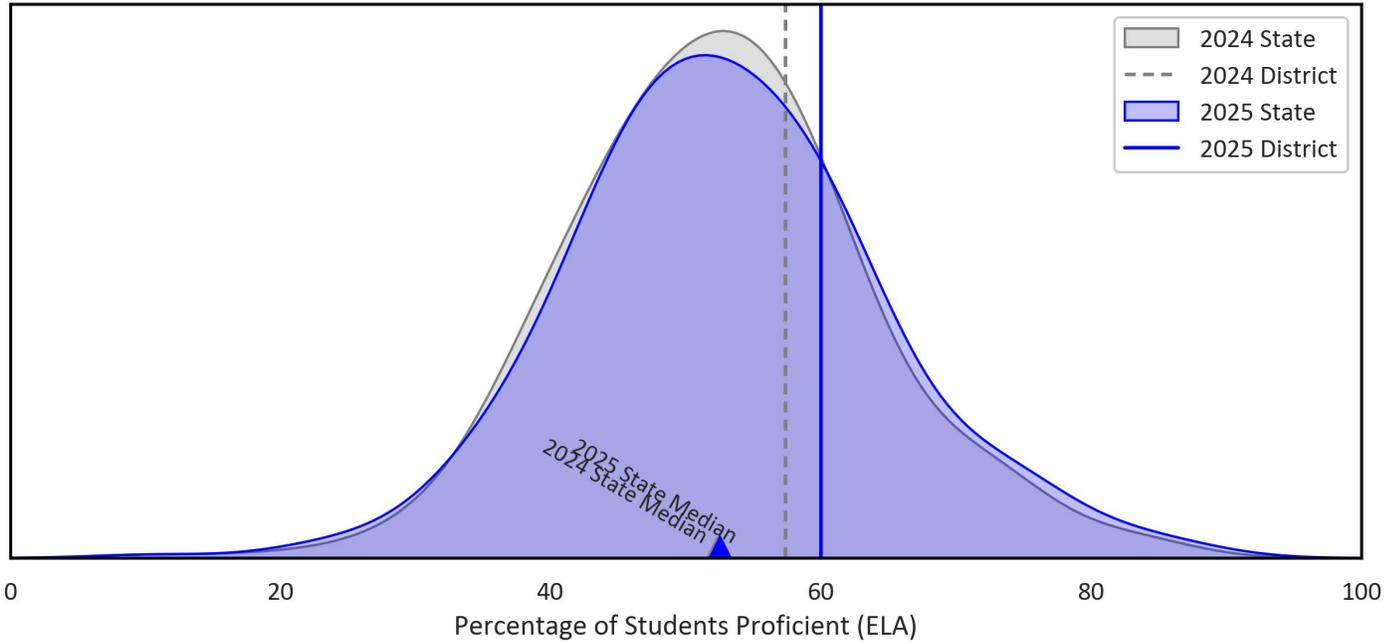
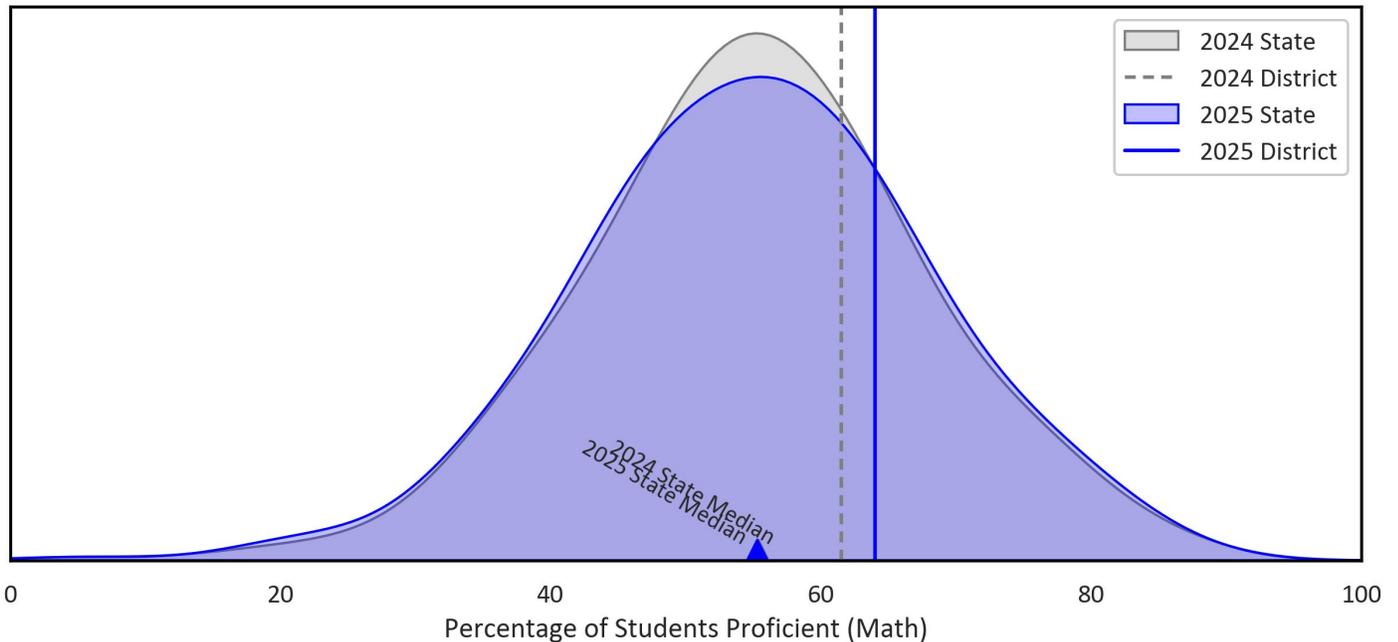


Figure 2. Proficiency Distribution of Wisconsin Districts - Math



The graphs below depict the percentage of students designated as Economically Disadvantaged against the percentage of all students meeting proficiency in the Spring of 2025 across the district. The proficiency grey dots represent all other school districts in the state, with a trend line included through the center of the distribution meeting proficiency.

Figure 3: Economically Disadvantaged vs. ELA Proficiency 2025

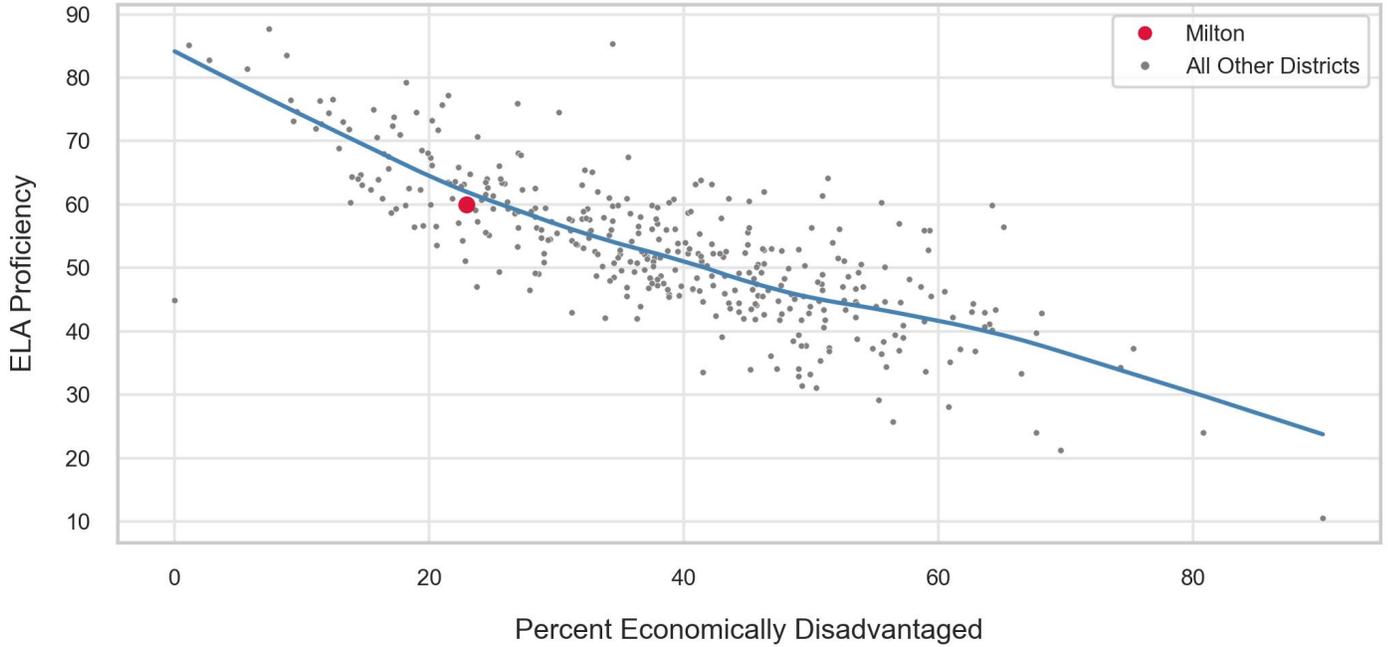
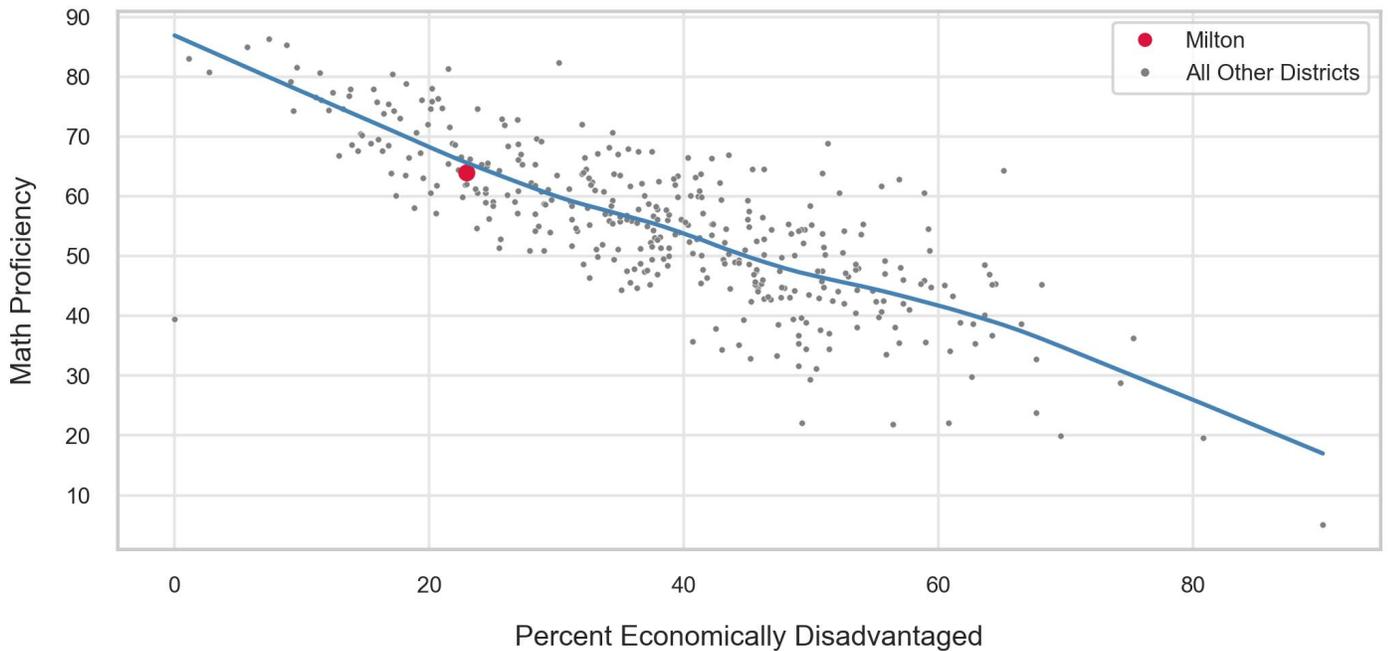


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2024-2025
Wisconsin
State Report Card Analysis

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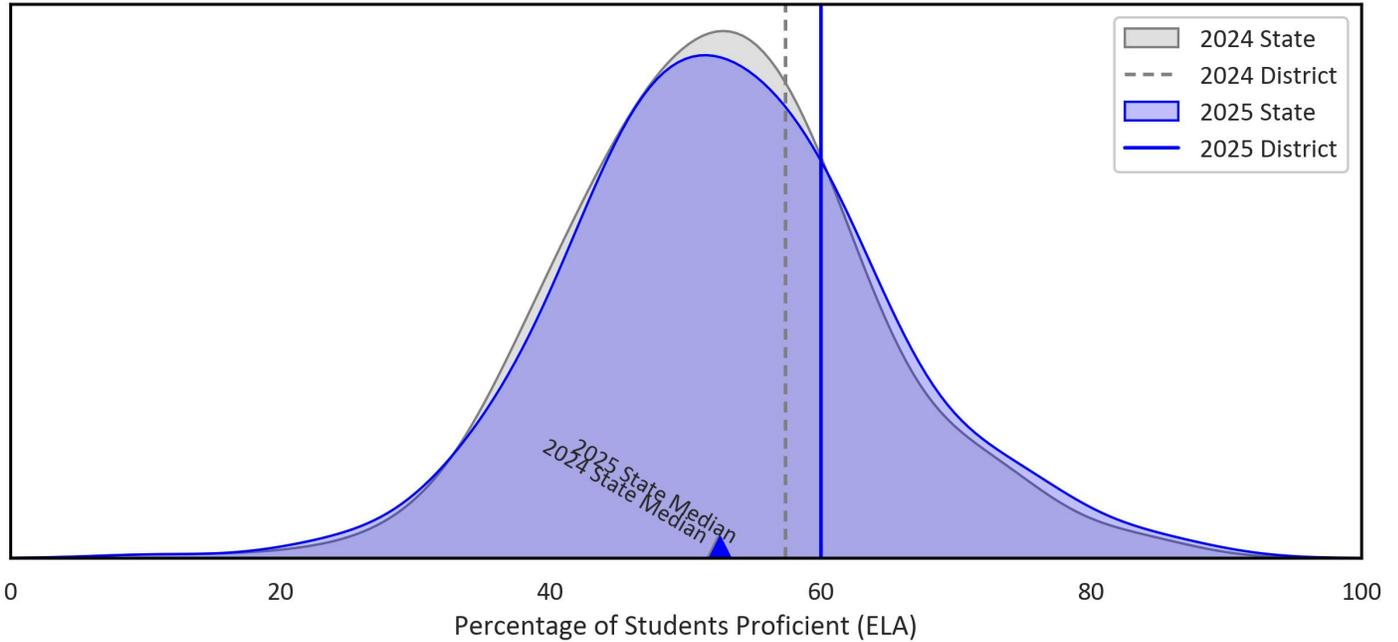
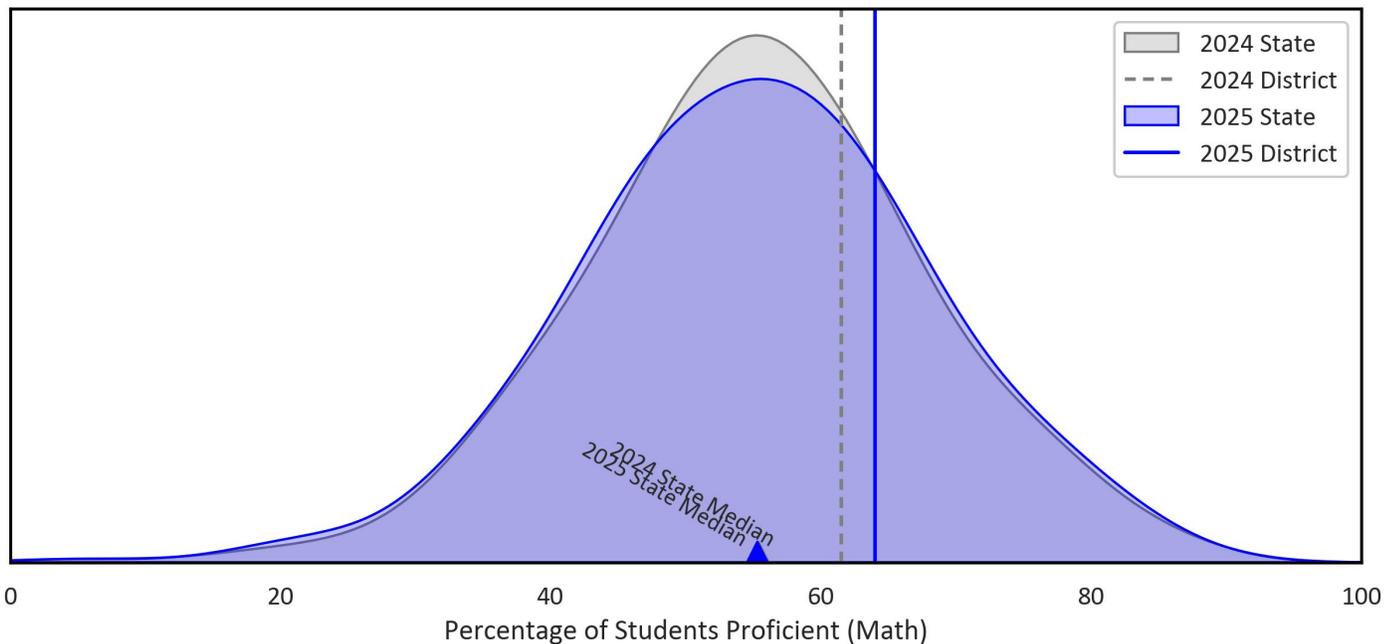


Figure 2. Proficiency Distribution of Wisconsin Districts - Math



The graphs below depict the percentage of students designated as Economically Disadvantaged against the percentage of all students meeting proficiency in the Spring of 2025 across the district. The proficiency grey dots represent all other school districts in the state, with a trend line included through the center of the distribution meeting proficiency.

Figure 3: Economically Disadvantaged vs. ELA Proficiency 2025

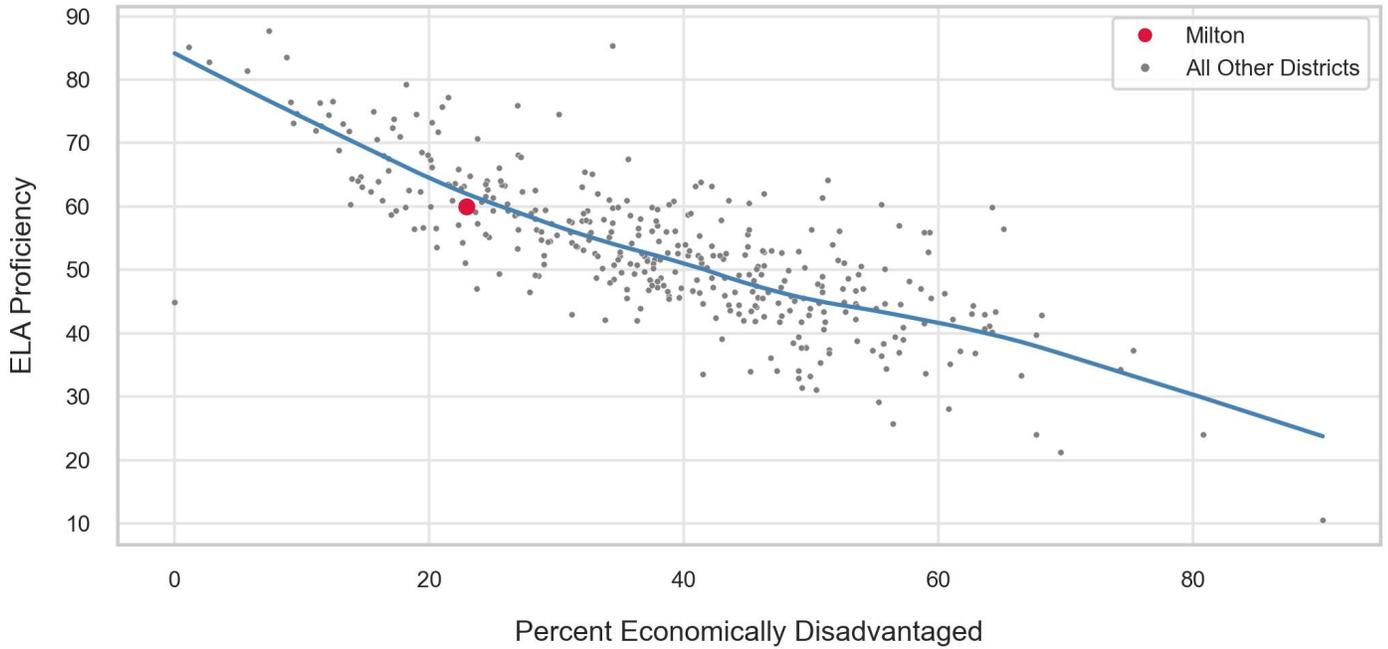


Figure 4: Economically Disadvantaged vs. Math Proficiency 2025

