



## *Statement*

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*The following is a statement released by Dr. Demond Means, Commissioner of the Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program:*

“As a proud Milwaukee Public Schools graduate, my heart aches for the children and families of Milwaukee because of the poverty, crime and other challenges of urban life. In the midst of such challenges, educational opportunity must serve as the great equalizer for the children of Milwaukee.

It was because of that desire to serve the children and families of Milwaukee that I agreed to volunteer as commissioner of the Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program. I took on the challenge with my eyes wide open.

There are certainly positive signs of people working together to do the good and hard work needed to combat poverty and instill a sense of hope. Working in education over the last 20-plus years, I know first-hand that great things can happen when women and men of good faith come together for the betterment of our children and our community.

Regrettably, it seems that in education, the focus on children gets lost, and conversations about policy and practice become more about the adults. In a city with so many challenges, the focus must be squarely on our children and what we can do to ensure that their futures are bright.

Over the last several months, it has become clear to me that efforts to implement the Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program law will become increasingly adversarial at a time when adversity is the last thing our children need. Moreover, I made a promise when I volunteered for this position that I would not impose anything on Milwaukee Public Schools.

It is now clear to me that as implementation of the law moves forward, the environment is not conducive to collaborative partnerships – something essential for positive things to happen in Milwaukee. Therefore, I have informed the County Executive that I am resigning effective immediately as commissioner of the Opportunity Schools and Partnership Program. I do so without malice or any political point of view and continue to have a deep desire to help our state’s neediest children.

While I am stepping away from the OSPP commissionership, I remain committed to advocating for equity in our schools and closing the achievement gap in Wisconsin. Like so many in the city, I will always fight for the oppressed, disadvantaged and underrepresented, especially our children.

I encourage that men and women of good faith be reasonable and come together and focus their energy on the actions that are needed to help provide Milwaukee’s youth with a quality education.”