



Media Contact: Alexis Kieft
Email: a.kieft@watersfoundation.org
Phone: (520) 909-7343

For Immediate Release

Systems Thinking Institute Brings Unique Learning Opportunity to Milwaukee Community

MILWAUKEE, Wisc. – A world leader in using systems thinking to provide exemplary professional development and improve student success, the [Waters Foundation](#) is proud to present the second-annual Milwaukee Systems Thinking Institute, March 14-16, held in partnership with [Milwaukee Public Schools](#).

The Institute will appeal to anyone looking to create effective changes in their work and achieve desired outcomes using the Habits and tools of systems thinking. From the classroom to the boardroom, there is something for everyone, including [workshops](#) focused on everything from classroom application to business strategy and more.

The Waters Foundation has been working in Milwaukee Public Schools since 2014, coaching teachers, administrators and central services staff in systems thinking, with the goal of improving student performance and teacher efficiency.

“We are thrilled to once again showcase the outstanding work being done by Milwaukee Public Schools at our Systems Thinking Institute. MPS educators are preparing students to be complex problem-solvers who recognize positive changes they can make on the systems they are a part of,” said Sheri Marlin, Chief Learning Officer of the Waters Foundation.

The Institute will be held at Daniel Webster Secondary School (Milwaukee Public Schools), and several of the workshops and events offered will showcase the systems thinking work being done in the district.

“Since we began working at MPS, we’ve seen student engagement in learning increase significantly. Watching students build confidence to think outside-the-box, ask tough questions, and develop innovative solutions to complex challenges is really what it’s all about. These are the kinds of thinkers future employers will require and our communities will need,” Marlin said.

Other partners of the Institute and workshop facilitators include the Urban Ecology Center, Learn Deep Milwaukee, and the Master of Sustainable Peacebuilding program (University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee).

“In addition to workshops, participants will have the opportunity to hear from incredible speakers whose insights will help broaden our perspectives — this is one of the key tenants of systems thinking,” said Marlin.

[Keynote speakers](#) include Ricardo Valerdi, Associate Professor in the Systems & Industrial Engineering Department at the University of Arizona and SpaceX Engineer; Major Thomas Ryan, Infantry Officer for the U.S. Army and Assistant Professor in the Systems Engineering Department at the United States Military Academy at West Point; and college interns at the Social System Design Lab at Washington University in Saint Louis.

“Our keynote speakers will cover everything from the role systems thinking plays in the mission to Mars, to decisions soldiers make on the battlefield, to creating solutions to social challenges such as youth homelessness and gun violence.”

“We really see systems thinking as critical to tackling some of our world’s most complex issues, and I am excited for our keynote presentations to demonstrate this to Institute participants,” remarked Marlin.

The Institute will also include a kick-off event the evening of March 14, which will feature a [panel discussion](#) among leaders in systems thinking, including Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Darienne Driver.

For more information on the Systems Thinking Institute, click [here](#).

To register, click [here](#).

###

About systems thinking:

Systems thinking utilizes habits, tools and concepts to develop an understanding of the interdependent structures of dynamic systems. When individuals have a better understanding of systems, they are better able to identify the leverage points that lead to desired outcomes.

About the Waters Foundation

Systems thinking grew from the work of MIT professor Jay Forrester, who introduced engineer and entrepreneur Jim Waters to its concepts in the early 1980s. Soon after, Jim and his wife Faith, a former teacher, began focusing their foundation's work on improving learning, teaching and schools through systems thinking. Since 1989, the Waters Foundation has brought systems thinking to more than 800 schools and 30,000+ educators. In that quarter-century, countless students have carried systems thinking from their classrooms to their communities and careers through Jim and Faith's legacy and the continuing work of the Waters Foundation. For more information, visit www.watersfoundation.org.