



## Career & Technical Education

### Director of CTE Mike Miller Reports:

#### MOCC Career Expo



*MOCC students are engaging with employers.*

On February 20<sup>th</sup>, we were able to dodge all the snow days and hold our annual Career Expo. This event marked a milestone for our students as they put their career readiness skills on full display to our business and industry partners. This year, we again had a great turnout of employers from our community, across the state, and beyond. Thanks to the diligent efforts of MOCC Career Services Coordinator, Jill Ray, nearly 50 employers attended!



*Leadership and goal-setting breakout session led by US Army National Guard Sergeant Max Neubauer.*

Our students were dressed for success, had their resumes in hand, and were ready to engage employers about careers in their chosen field. Before the expo, students had several opportunities to wear and receive feedback on their interview attire. This practice paid huge dividends as they proudly wore their “Sunday best” and exuded confidence in making eye contact, shaking hands, and presenting potential employers with their highly refined resumes.



*Student alumni panel: Samantha Stilson ('18), Kylee Purcell ('18), Cody Schultz ('18), Noah Drake ('16), and Camden Gruszeki ('14).*

In addition to interacting with employers, students rotated through three breakout sessions aimed at

further honing their career readiness: a leadership and goal-setting session with US Army National Guard Sergeant Max Neubauer, an alumni panel discussion led by Math Consultant Justin Fox, and a human resources panel discussion facilitated by MOCC Assistant Principal Caleb Martz.



*Human resources panel with HR professionals from the City of Big Rapids, Ferris, Lowes, NOCTI, and Yoplait.*

Although the MOCC Career Expo is primarily for MOCC students, this is the second year we've extended an invitation to our local districts' non-MOCC seniors to attend. Regardless of a student's plans after high school, the Career Expo is a great opportunity for students to jump-start their careers!

## Special Projects

### Director of Special Projects Karen Roy Reports:

We are keeping our fingers crossed for an easy transition into spring - May the luck of the Irish be with us all!

I am participating in a book study with other folks in the community and from FSU on the book, *Evicted*, by Matthew Desmond. This book study is helping me in my efforts to increase awareness

of the need for working with landlords to increase the number of safe, affordable housing slots in our region. Whenever you have a university in your town, your housing market is skewed, and it pushes families out as the housing becomes less available, and out of reach financially and it often no longer meets health and safety qualifications required if families have a voucher to assist with securing housing. Not being close to town often exacerbates issues due to lacking transportation and proximity to work and other resources to help support the family. We also held a meeting with landlords (on a nasty weather day of course) to have this very same discussion as a follow-up to our Landlord Luncheon in the fall.

Outcomes of this work:

1. Landlords want to continue to come together to work on solutions together.
2. Landlords and service providers would like to develop a homegrown wraparound process for about 3-4 families as a pilot project. The project would include:
  - o A risk mitigation fund (to help with non-reimbursable property damages)
  - o Case management for identified tenant (weekly, min. contact)
  - o Tenant and landlord education
  - o Monthly case review by Continuum of Care to help identify creative solutions and barrier bust when necessary.

- The goal is self-sufficiency and housing stability for both landlords and tenants.

There is much work to be completed by the community agency partners and landlords before such a program gets underway, including securing funding for the risk management fund. Folks agreed to continue moving forward and recruiting others to attend the next meeting scheduled for May 9th from 4 p.m.-6 p.m., location TBD. This work fits in with helping to create resilience in our families and ameliorate trauma caused by homelessness and poverty.

All preschool (GSRP) staff have participated in the Strengthening Families training in the last couple of months. Many have elected to participate in an additional two-hour follow-up training, and all will be involved in an implementation training at the end of the year. Staff will be working with a trainer to develop materials to take with them when they conduct their home visits in the fall with their new families/students. These home visits are for relationship building, and Strengthening Families provides a great framework to being building helping, collaborative relationships while helping families identify and strengthen their family resilience in the process. These documents will be expanded upon over the course of the year, and additional training/information will be shared throughout the year with families at all planned contacts and events. Staff will be supported monthly in their implementation of

Strengthening Families and reporting out will become part of our weekly Zoom meetings. The protective factors around which the framework is built are [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net):

- Parental resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Concrete support in times of need
- Social and emotional competence of children

Other exciting happenings from our corner of the world include:

- Mecosta County Community & Family Expo, April 27th from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Big Rapids Middle School.
- Car seat safety educational clinics have been set up for the year. Special thanks to Life Resources of Northern Michigan, Inc. for being willing to take reservations for these events taking place across the region.
- Mom Power groups are going to be up and running soon! Mom Power is a program that supports families who are facing adversity and stress through the challenges of caring for young children, offering a strengths-based, nurturing approach to promoting resilience in parents and children. This program is a collaborative effort between our Great Start Collaborative, District Health Depart #10, and Community Mental Health for Central Michigan.

- The Breastfeeding Support Group is another group supported by intentional collaboration between multiple agencies to address identified needs in our community and articulated in our work plan for our Great Start Collaboration funding.

These are just a few of the many great projects happening out there as we continue to link families with supports and services, so children make it to our doors, healthy, thriving and ready to learn. We appreciate your continued support. By the way...we can use guest readers in our classrooms... let me know!

### **Director of Technology Fred Sharpsteen Reports:**

#### **E-rate Update:**

Over the past couple of months, we have been looking at the E-rate needs for the MOISD that will be eligible under the E-rate service program for July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020 funding year. We have submitted applications to continue long-term contracts with vendors. These contracts are for the shared Internet service and the leased fiber connection from the local schools to the MOISD. In total, this would save an estimated \$81,000 for all local schools and the MOISD.

#### **Equity for Students and the Homework Gap:**

We are working to reschedule the Newaygo RESA site visit for our group of technology directors and local

government members to look at the NCAT wireless system. We will be working to complete this visit in March. We also continue to keep an eye on the FCC and EBS spectrum that would help get Internet connections to the homes of students.

I recently met with the City of Big Rapids. They have done an outstanding job creating free internet access throughout the community in places like the local library and city parks. We spoke about future collaboration of fiber as well. We will be checking to see if other local communities would be willing to start similar programs.

### **General Education**

#### **Director of General Education Tonya Harrison Reports:**

##### **The General Ed Team:**

The Gen Ed team works to find ways to provide ongoing support and learning opportunities that align with the MOISD goals. Recently, we hosted an event to support the locals to work with their Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA). Until the current school year, only Title I schools were required to complete the CNA. Under current legislation, all school buildings will be completing a CNA. The learning brought together teams from several local districts. Teams evaluated their state and local data, worked to create building goals, and collaborated on their future

activities to support the adult and student learning.

### Early Literacy:

Cathy Wirth supported the Evart Reads program by attending and working a story walk based on the book; Robot In Love. The event was held in Evart's Friend's Ministry Thrift Store which promoted literacy and local business. The story walk is comprised of a featured book that is spread throughout the venue. Each page includes many options for the reader to engage with the text: targeted vocabulary, QR codes to deepen the readers understanding, etc. Each child had the opportunity to create a make-and-take and enter to win a coding robot and book. Every family left with snacks, gifts, and a copy of Robot In Love. This particular story walk will be available throughout March.



*Evart Reads Story Walk*

We are excited that the Instructional Rounds at Evart Elementary School are finally happening! After being canceled twice due to snow days, the event took place on February 28.



*A team of teachers sharing out at Evart*

The goal of Instructional Rounds is for a group of educators to visit classrooms, looking for specific practices/classroom environment, take qualitative notes, and to share out their findings with the school team. The team involved in the Rounds are literacy coaches, elementary teachers, and ISD representatives. We had participants from several local schools, Ottawa Area ISD, the State's Literacy Task Force, Gratiot-Isabella and AMA ISDs, and teachers from Ithaca and Alpena. The group visited classrooms, interviewed teachers and the building principal, and collected data from the classrooms. After the observation data was collected, the team shared out themes of celebrations and potentials needs of the building. Those data points will be shared out with the building team, allowing them to decide upon a course of action. The ISD coaches and general education team will be providing ongoing support for the school. The excitement and desire to learn expressed by the building principal and teachers was contagious! There is a renewal of energy from the staff that will impact the students of Evart Elementary.



*Kyle Mayer, from Ottawa ISD, explaining Instructional Rounds*

### **Math and Science:**

Our math/science consultants continue to stay busy providing training and learning to our local schools. During the week of February 25, Larry Wyn led a three-day training surrounding the Math Recovery Interventionist Specialist. After the learning is completed, the participants will have the Interventionist Specialist Certificate, allowing them to provide support to students and teachers in their respective buildings. It is an intensive training spanning seven days.

In addition to working with Math Recovery, our coaches are continuing to support the Mi-Stem region through computer science learning, computer science fairs, and our regional robotics/STEM fairs.

### **Behavioral Specialist:**

Michael Bausano continues to provide support to the locals. He is involved with the collaborative project involving Dr. Mark Sloan and our local DHHS. The team is supporting a small number of students from Evert and Reed City. Michael also provided crisis support to Evert High School,

with the recent death of one of their students. Not only was he a part of the crisis management team but did some “post-debriefing” with the high school administrator for feedback and to check in on the staff and students. Michael will also be providing some additional social work supports to Evert Elementary for a short time. Our ongoing goal is to support our MOISD goals of behavior and trauma learning and supports to our students, teachers, and administration.

## **Special Education**

### **Director of Special Education Kim Tufnell Reports:**

Sadly, all of our events planned for the year with Michigan Alliance for Families have either been canceled or put on hold until further notice, due to the lack of attendance in comparison to the resources the Alliance is providing. We appreciate all MDE and MAF have done to support our students, staff, and families over the past two years, and hope that we will have more opportunities in the future to partner.

Dr. Sloane and I met with Scott Lombard, RN, the Community Outreach and Health Education Manager at Spectrum Health - Big Rapids and Reed City, Taryn Hurlbert, RN Evert School Nurse and Brandee Fountain, MOISD School Nurse to discuss the trauma project and how we can partner in order to provide

better outcomes for students both at school and home who have experienced trauma. It was a productive meeting, and we look forward to great collaboration as the project continues.

The Michigan Council for Exceptional Children conference was held in Grand Rapids March 6-8. Dr. Sloane provided a day-long training on The Trauma Responsive School Community where he mentioned his work with MOISD and our district partners. The snow days have wreaked havoc on staff's ability to attend considering the time pulled away from providing services and/or the classroom.

MOISD Itinerants Lindsey LaGrow, Karis Blubaugh and Brianna Ballew were invited to visit the Children's Trauma Assessment Center in Kalamazoo to observe a day of assessments with Dr. Jim Henry and the CTAC staff. The team said it was an incredible learning experience and will share with their colleagues at our team meetings this week.

Again this year, as a requirement of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states are only allowed to have 1% of their students assessed with alternative assessments. This would mean for Michigan, only 1% of the special education population may take the Mi-Access rather than the M-Step. Due to Michigan exceeding the 1% in previous years, each district who contributed to the +2.3% statewide needed to provide an EXCEEDING 1%

CAP JUSTIFICATION FORM to the ISD by January 15. The ISDs were required to collect the forms, complete the ISD Justification Form and submit to MDE by February 8. All districts but one within the ISD area have exceeded the cap, and all forms as required have been submitted. MDE will use the data to apply for a waiver allowing greater than 1%. As required by law, the IEP Team determines as to which assessment would be appropriate for the student.

### **Special Education Supervisor Beth Bond Reports:**

The MOEC students and staff are hoping to have more consistent school days in March then we did in January and February. Our students thrive on having regular schedules and routines, so our recent weather has been a challenge for some, but the staff is great at getting everyone back on track.

Back in October, the Adult Transition Center – 1 (ATC-1) young adults assembled thousands of "Boo Bags" for Big Country 100.9 WWBR in Big Rapids. As "payment," the radio station funds a trip to a movie theatre. This year, staff and students decided to keep it local and went to the Bulldog Theatre where they saw *How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World*. Since the theatre could accommodate more students than those in the ATC-1 program, the young adults invited some of the younger students at the MOEC to join them. Everyone raved about the

movie and the experience. Future field trips are being discussed...perhaps as an entire school experience. Also since many of our students have special sensory and/or auditory needs, conversations with the owners to provide "special accommodation" evening showings are taking place so perhaps families could enjoy a movie night out.



*A student is looking pretty relaxed.*



*A student is enjoying his beverage.*



*A student is having a good time too.*  
As one of the young adults was walking down the hall at the end of the day, after they had gone to the

movie, he looked into one of the classrooms and said, "Thank you for letting us invite you to the movies." Love it!

March's Reading Month is here. The MOEC kicked off the month by serving Green Eggs and Ham in recognition of the anniversary of Dr. Seuss' birthday. This year's theme is **Book-in It in the Barnyard**. There will be many special activities this month for students to participate in at school including jokes of the day, door decorating, and spirit week. There are also activities for students to do outside of school...students will earn certificates for filling up their BINGO card with reading at home with his/her parents.

A very special event that coincides with our Farm Theme is a visit from the star of the National Geographic Wild his show *The Incredible Dr. Pol*. Dr. Pol and his wife, Diane, will be at the MOEC on Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 to talk about his vet clinic in Weidman, MI where his TV show is filmed. We are inviting parents to join us for this event, and he will have copies of his autobiography, *Never Turn Your Back on an Angus Cow* available for sale. Several students are hoping to get a picture with Dr. Pol...I'm sure that can be arranged!

Also on March 19<sup>th</sup>, the MOEC staff has arranged for a fundraiser to take place at the Big Rapids Pizza Hut. From 4 – 8 pm, 10% of all proceeds (eat in or carry out) will be given to



the MOEC to fund some of our student and parent events that are held throughout the year. Various staff will be at Pizza Hut during the evening to eat dinner with students/families. Please join us and/or encourage people to take part in this fundraiser.

### **Special Education Supervisor Pat Craven Reports:**

#### **US-10 Corridor Implements Incentive Program:**

Teachers on the US-10 Corridor have been using the MobyMax curriculum for three years to meet the academic needs of students who are below the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade level and to fill skill deficits for all students. The curriculum is connected to the Common Core and can be connected to IEP goals. Starting this year, MobyMax has provided four incentives to motivate students. The first contest ran from January 7 to February 17. Students earned points for successfully completing work. For every 100 points, they earn a ticket. At the end of each week, a virtual drawing occurred, allowing a winner from each participating classroom. Winning students then went to MobyMax to pick a prize. They could select from a baseball cap, a t-shirt or a book bag. Prizes should be arriving to go out to students in the next week or so.

Starting next week, classes will start on March 4 and go until April 14. Three classes will win a Great Spring Party! The top three classrooms that create the most points during their two-week contest will win. The total points for a classroom are adjusted for the classroom size. In other words, the total points for a classroom with 20 students will be equalized so a classroom with 30 students won't have an advantage. Winning teachers will be able to select an e-card and purchase the supplies to have an awesome Spring Party in their classroom. In the fall we can look forward to the Get Crackin' Fall Kickoff! Where students will again compete within their classes for three individual prizes per room. The year will end with The Massively Monstrous Party, another contest between classes with three classes winning parties.