

MECOSTA-OSCEOLA ISD DEPARTMENT UPDATES

December 2018

**"Helping Schools
Help Students"**



Career & Technical Education

Director of CTE Mike Miller Reports:

National Apprenticeship Week - Contributed by Linda Ward and Jill Ray

National Apprenticeship Week was November 12-18, 2018. "National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) is a national celebration that offers leaders in business, labor, education, and other critical partners a chance to demonstrate their support for apprenticeships" (www.dol.gov).



On November 13th, MOCC students from Welding, Diesel, Construction, Innovative Engineering, and Automotive participated in panel discussions on opportunities through apprenticeships with representatives from Big Rapids Products, Cargill, Hamtech, Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters, Nartron, Reed City Group, and Vitro. Jonathan Eppley from

Michigan Works! West Central facilitated the discussion. Students listened and asked questions to panel members who shared their personal experiences as current or former apprentices and the opportunities available to students.

During lunchtime, Mrs. Ward facilitated a roundtable discussion among MOCC staff members and our business and industry guests regarding how we can strengthen our apprenticeship pathway for students. Some of the ideas include pre-apprenticeship agreements for current MOCC students, field trips, job shadowing and other work-based learning opportunities, guest speakers, and participation in our Career Expo (job fair) in February. They also discussed the training opportunities for future and current employees through Meceola Tech including the Going Pro Training Fund, registered apprenticeship training, and employee update training. It was a fruitful day where we built/strengthened relationships between education and industry.

Public Safety Beginning CPR and First Aid Training

Contributed by Joy Paquette

Public Safety students have begun training for Heartsaver® CPR and First Aid certification through the American Heart Association (AHA). It will be a collaborative, team-teaching effort between Public Safety and Corrections

students during the month of December. The importance of this training is illustrated by two recent experiences by current EMT student, Michael Mortensen, who earned his AHA Heartsaver® certification last year in Public Safety.

As a member of the Reed City Fire Department, Michael was working in September when a call came out for an unresponsive male and CPR in progress at McDonald's. Michael arrived on the scene where first responders were performing CPR. He immediately went into action. He cut the victim's shirt off and installed the LUCAS machine along with the AED pads. After two shocks, the patient was revived! Michael said he learned how to use the AED and felt confident in his actions due to the training he received in Public Safety.

A few months later on Saturday, November 17th, Leroy Township Fire Department was dispatched for an unconscious female not breathing. Knowing that Leroy Fire is short personnel and that the victim's house was near his, Michael responded and was the first one on scene along with a Wexford-Missaukee Public Safety student. They immediately began working on the woman performing CPR and checking for vital signs. Again, Michael said he felt confident in his actions due to the training he has received at the MOCC.

Special Projects

Director of Special Projects Karen Roy Reports:

Merry Christmas! Here's wishing you and yours all the best!

Our Family Engagement team has partnered with community partners and local teaching staff to host/plan book walk events. We have hosted two successful book walk events this fall and below is the schedule for the remainder of the year:

Fall: October-November

Eastwood- October 18th (250 people in attendance)
Reed City- November 8th (52 people in attendance)

December:

Eastwood- December 13th

Winter: January-March

Barryton- January (waiting on date confirmation)
Morley Stanwood- February 28th
Mecosta- March 14th

Spring: April-June

Weidman- April 11th
Eastwood- May 2nd
Evart- May 9th

These events support all the work we are doing in early literacy and incorporate the Essentials into the event in a very engaging, explicit and shareable way. Modeling how to use books with young children and how to expand on the story at home helps the make reading come alive for children and their parents and the shared experience only drives that positive experience deeper and we create family memories and provide an outing for families. Times and flyers will be coming out soon, or you can always follow us on Facebook:

@MecostaOsceolaGreatStartParentCoalition

or

@ Mecosta-OsceolaCommunityEngagementTh.

The first of four opportunities to participate in Strengthening Families Training is taking place on November 30. These training opportunities introduce participants to the Strengthening Families framework which is all about building family resilience. Strengthening Families is a research-informed approach to increase family strengths, enhance child development, and reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. It is based on engaging families, programs, and communities in building five key Protective Factors.

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

Here are links to data about child abuse and neglect in our two-county area [Mecosta Kids Count Data](#) [Osceola Kids Count Data](#). Our rankings on confirmed cases of child abuse are 59 for Mecosta and 48 for Osceola out of 83 counties. We can improve those rankings; we must improve those rankings.

I have been working with all our local districts on completing their McKinney-Vento self-assessments which are due later this month. We have worked with MDE to streamline this process and make the self-assessment more meaningful and useful as a tool for improvement. While not perfect, this new tool and process are way better than the one we had to complete in the last grant round, and we are learning from this one how to make it even better. As a result of all the work, we have been doing to align the data collection tool with the self-assessment, for those districts using the tool with fidelity, over 80% of the documentation for completing the self-

assessment can be done using our data collection tool.

I am beginning working with GSRP teaching teams to work through accountability processes related to classroom goals they have identified in the areas of literacy and social, emotional development. We are working with their lead measures (anecdotal notes) to impact our lag measures (school readiness). It is shaping up to be an interesting process, and I will report more as we move along. We are just in the very early stages as I write this report, but look for some cool learning as we go along! I am looking forward to joining my staff on this growth journey.

Thanks for your continued support!

Director of Technology Fred Sharpsteen Reports:

The month of November was a whirlwind. Once again, we have been working on the airplane while it's still in flight. This time the "airplane" is the production network, and we're making major changes to it while it's still in operation. These changes were needed to prepare for implementation of the new ISD/LEA firewalls. We installed the MOISD core switch, through which all ISD staff and student network traffic flow. This change was able to take place during a normal workday with no reports of network interruptions. The team did an amazing job, and there was great cooperation with the LEAs.

FCC Meetings in Washington, D.C.:

The meetings at the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) went well. We scheduled meetings with two of the four FCC commissioners. These meetings were an opportunity to create communication channels and do some advocating, helping

the FCC understand the important role that Educational Broadband Services (EBS) could potentially play in education. Our main goal was to request that the FCC allow education to license this spectrum after 12 years of not being allowed. We were also able to speak with some staff from the Broadband Division of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. They had some great questions for the team.

Part of the team was also able to meet with the offices of U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters. The team attempted to convey to them the importance of EBS.

Throughout our meetings in D.C., we used Northern Michigan University as an example of the model system, they have a license waiver and have had success with operating the system since 2014. Newaygo has an unlicensed system but would like to upgrade to an EBS license. Mecosta and Osceola counties have high poverty rates, and we'd like to explore how this licensing could help students with literacy and homework gaps resulting from lack of access.

Why does the homework gap exist:
 Commercial entities haven't and won't reach into the low population density rural areas of the state with the services families need, primarily because there's not a good return on investment. Even where commercial services are provided, they fall short of the needs of families, either in performance or in being too expensive (as much as \$100/mo). There isn't a business case for service providers in more rural areas. Only rural educational anchor institutions are motivated to provide the necessary services for our children.

- Unlicensed spectrum is inadequate and prone to problems from interference, and

other providers can come in and set up next to you creating interference

- Rural communities need EBS to fill in the underserved area of the community. The following is what the FCC says is needed for modern access:
 - Uncapped service or no limits of data usage
 - Speeds of 25 Mbps down and 5 Mbps up
- No throttling
- Affordable cost for the services
- Safe internet with the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA) compliant filtering on the services. Internet providers don't usually offer this as a service, or it is at an added cost.
- No long-term contracts

General Education

Director of General Education Tonya Harrison Reports:



Happy Halloween from the Resource Center

The General Education team has had another busy month, as we work to get into the local schools and continue with our learning and growth. Each of our team members is staying busy with their state groups, as we represent our area and ISD at the state level. Tonya Harrison recently presented at the State School Improvement Conference, alongside the State Data Hub team, as the voice for using the platform for school improvement and instructional practices. MDE is currently re-working the School/District Improvement process and

platform, so it is crucial for our team to have our voice heard at the level, where decisions are being made. As changes come from MDE, we will ensure that our locals stay informed about the new process.

Early Literacy:

Much of the work by our literacy coaches continue to be on ensuring our locals have access and learning opportunities, as it relates to the Essential Practices in Early Literacy. Both coaches have been trained in the Pre-K Essential Practices, along with Jessica Wimmer, from the General Education Department. The goal will be to unite learning for preschool teachers and staff. There is an additional component for home learning that will be covered, primarily by Jessica. We are excited about the opportunity to share in the learning and create excitement and common vocabulary for our Pre-K teachers.



Coaches at the Pre-K Essential Practices Learning

Our coaches are very excited about the involvement at Evart Elementary. A new Literacy Leadership Team has been created, and the teachers are excited about their new learning and shifts in some of their classroom practices. We hope to see not only gains in scores but a renewed spirit in the teaching of “all things literacy”! Many of the teachers are now “rebuilding” their classroom libraries by interest, rather than level, creating more buy-in from the students, as they search for books to read. Valerie Hopkins, a 3rd-grade teacher, shared her story at our October board meeting.

Math/Science:

Add+Vantage MR - Course 1:

Our 20 instructors finished up days three and four of Add+Vantage Math Recovery Course 1. All 20 instructors visited Riverview Elementary to give live assessments with Mrs. Robinson’s 1st-grade classroom. They recorded each of their assessments and then analyzed the student’s understanding as small groups. Having the ability to practice these assessments and dive into the child’s understanding has been the most impactful part of this workshop. Participants finished out the workshop by learning about various tools, lessons, and activities that they can incorporate in the classroom to help fill gaps in student’s understanding.



Teachers Working in Math Recovery Workshop

Star Lab - Barryton Elementary:

Larry and the Star Lab visited Barryton Elementary during the week of Thanksgiving. School-wide, the students were learning all about Astronomy (stars, planets, constellations) through various activities. As a wrap up for the week, students explored the Star Lab and were able to see the constellations that they were studying.



Larry with Students at the Star Lab

Behavioral Specialist:

Michael continues to offer a variety of professional learning for our local schools and ISD staff. He, along with Mary Corder, will be offering CPI training December 6-7, February 21-22, and March 14-15. All training will be held in the Resource Center. Another three day CHAMPS: Tier I Classroom Management Learning, will take place on January 15/February 19/March 19. Mecosta-Osceola Trauma Informed Community (MOTIC) Project:

Michael has been coordinating efforts with Dr. Mark Sloane, WMU Children's Trauma Assessment Center, the Department of Health and Human Services and area educators to establish resiliency-focused and trauma-informed supports for students impacted by trauma. The activities of the Mecosta-Osceola Trauma Informed Community (MOTIC) project this school year will consist of an array of focused efforts to create and sustain high collaboration and trauma-responsive practices among educational staff, parents/caregivers, and community-based partners in the Evart and Reed City Area Public School Districts.

Special Education

Director of Special Education Kim Tufnell Reports:

As we head into the holiday season, I would be remiss if I didn't recognize and give thanks to our incredible special education staff. We have taken on some intense initiatives, such as CHAMPS, MIBLSI and our trauma collaboration with Dr. Mark Sloane. While it is all incredibly exciting, it does not come without additional layers of work and responsibility for our teams. I cannot thank them enough for always

approaching anything we suggest with complete positivity. We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated team who make me proud every day by how they represent the ISD and our department.

I had the pleasure of facilitating our second Orange Frog Workshop with 24 participants from the ISD on October 31. The Orange Frog is a parable based upon positive psychology and the work of Harvard Psychologist Shawn Achor, author of *The Happiness Advantage*. The book, *The Orange Frog*, sets the stage for the Leading Positive Results workshop, which is about creating a happier, more productive, more satisfying life and workplace. All special education supervisors, secretaries, school psychologists, school social workers, teacher consultants, some US10 and Early On staff together with a local social worker have been Orange Frog graduates and "spreading the orange" ISD-wide.



It's a true sign of the times as our professional organization MAASE (Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education) has dedicated this entire year's professional learning to behavior and trauma. All supervisors and several psychologists, social workers and teacher consultants attended the December 4 professional learning **Practical Strategies for Reducing Anxiety and Defiant Behaviors in the Classroom** by Jessica Minihan, author of [The Behavior Code Companion](#). The presentation was filled to

capacity at the Crowne Plaza, which has been unprecedented since we have been attending in over six years. It was a great day of learning and collaborating as a team.

We are excited to have a new EI teacher, Rachel Lovejoy, on board with our already incredible team. This EI program will be completely self-contained, as compared with our others where students attend a combination of general education classes and the EI classroom as needed and their behavior allows. We are thrilled to be collaborating with Dr. Mark Sloane of the Children's Trauma Assessment Center (CTAC) on this Trauma/EI pilot project in this classroom, in our other EI programs and with our partners in Reed City and Evart.

Special Education Supervisor Beth Bond Reports:



MOEC Upcoming events:

Annual Santa Shop organized and hosted by the Adult Transition 1 Program is scheduled for Wednesday, 12/12 (make-up day is 12/17). Area crafters will be bringing items for men, women, boys, and girls priced from \$1.00 to \$5.00.

Students will have the opportunity to shop for their family and friends with their classmates and help from MOISD staff. This event is a great way for our students to practice social skills such as choice making, turn taking, and good manners, along with math/money skills. The Santa Shop is a student only activity and participation by students is completely optional.

This month, I am featuring our Resource Room teachers/classrooms:

Cindy Swymeler, Secondary RR -

We are a classroom of middle and high school age students who mostly have autism and require more support than can be found in a middle school or high school MOCI classroom. We work on communication and building independence and self- advocacy. In our morning calendar time, students are responsible for their calendar and weather graph as we move through a month. We work on typical reading activities and also focus on a core vocabulary word wall that uses photos with the words, and we also do "making words" where we break down a large word and build smaller words to work on phonics and word study. Cindy and her students are supported by paras Gina Durfee and Michele Paulson.



A student working on core vocabulary.



A student playing a vocabulary word game.



A student is identifying words he needs to use in his writing.

Jenny Knopf, Elementary Resource Room Teacher –

Jenny's students are in grades kindergarten through 4th grade. Again, these students mostly have autism and require more support than can be found in a typical elementary building. Students at this level are learning how to "do school" by working on positive behavior strategies such as following directions and staying on-task. They also work on communication and independent functional skills. Jenny's classroom has two paras, Barb Barber and Harry Coles.

Jenny organizes our annual Harvest Dinner. In collaboration with Jennifer Upham and students from the MOCC culinary program, students (and staff) were able to sample traditional Thanksgiving Day foods including turkey and pumpkin pie. Students from the Adult Transition Center downtown campus (Ellen Kanitz, teacher) helped serve in the kitchen and help out in the cafeteria.

Jenny also organized a staff t-shirt sale to support Ed Center teacher, Kayla Hammermeister, who underwent a recent surgery. Kayla appears to be recovering nicely.



**Special Education Supervisor
Christy Miller Reports:**

Assistive Technology Journey Symposium

Members from Wexford Missaukee ISD came together with members of three districts from the Mecosta Osceola ISD over November 1 & 2 to attend a professional development provided by representatives from the Alt Shift organization. Former MOISD speech therapist Sara Smith and current therapist Megan Medler wrote a grant at the end of last school year to provide this learning opportunity to members of local districts. The professional development focused on building capacity in local districts through the use of a team-based evaluation system and is the first part of a year-long training. Members of the training will continue the year with coaching sessions, webinars, book studies, and a in-person capstone training at the WMISD.



Special Education Supervisor Pat Craven Reports:

CHAMPS on The Corridor

The US 10 Corridor Schools continues to pursue excellence in school and classroom structure as we work to faithfully implement concepts learned through our CHAMPS training. Teachers and staff are working to review classroom procedures and protocols weekly. Sometimes, these often overlooked protocols, are reviewed on a daily basis so that students, staff, and teachers will fully understand what is expected of them at every moment of the school day. Some of these procedures and protocols may include how to enter and exit the classroom appropriately, how to advocate for oneself in an effort to improve academically, or even how to communicate with a teacher to let them know of an extenuating circumstance in their life that might impact how they are performing in the classroom on that particular day. The principles of the CHAMPS program provides a solid outline for teachers to clearly communicate expectations for all parties involved in the education process. It also assists in the growth of positive relationships of trust. We know that positive relationships strongly influence the upward growth of students who may be in or near an at-risk student population.

US 10 Staff Join Together To Offer Help

Recently the US 10 staff family has joined together to assist the family of a Muskegon River Youth Home employee that is in a battle with cancer. US 10 staff have led the charge in finding meals for the family, holiday gifts for the children, and helping to provide any family needs that may come from the daily struggles of fighting cancer. The love and compassion that

continues to be shown toward others is a beacon of light and service that the US 10 staff family embraces. Another new US 10 family member recently coordinated the donation of several winter jackets for young ladies being served on the girl's treatment unit at Muskegon River Youth Home. Way to go US 10!