

***Our Mission:  
Supporting Schools and  
Student Achievement***

***Our Vision:  
Impacting our community through high-quality educational programs, services, and learning experiences.***

## **Career & Technical Education**

### **Director of CTE Mike Miller Reports:**

#### **Innovative Engineering Student Receives Statewide Recognition**

(Contributed by Doug Ward)

Big Rapids Senior, Evelyn Hinkley, received a Breaking Traditions Certificate of Recognition from MDE's Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Due to restrictions from COVID-19, she was mailed her certificate. Among other things, nominees must, contribute to awareness of non-traditional careers through successful participation in one or more of the following activities:

- *Exemplary completion of a program considered non-traditional to the student's gender;*
- *Successful competition in a program-related event or contest;*
- *Participation in a CTE Student Organization;*
- *Recruitment of other students into programs non-traditional for their gender;*
- *Mentor other students in CTE programs non-traditional for their gender; or*
- *Make significant contributions to the student's CTE program.*

Evelyn is deserving of the Breaking Traditions award in more ways than just being a non-traditional student. Eve entered our Engineering program as a pint-sized, quiet-as-a-mouse, polite, young lady, in a

class full of young men. She has become a respected member and leader in class. Ms. Hinkey demonstrates to others how to safely and accurately run equipment, how to calculate precise features, and how to be a lead by example.

Eve is a problem solver. She welcomes problems and opportunities through exploring her options and the tools and knowledge available to her. After considering her options, Eve then formulates a plan while considering other team members and their strengths and ideas.

Evelyn is selfless! Eve volunteers for most events outside of class volunteering to help with open houses, tours, and other events that require her to invest her own time. She maintains excellent grades and school life, all while working at Culvers now for most of her senior year at Big Rapids High School after her school day and on weekends.

Eve has developed her confidence and honed her skills into a chosen career path. She will be continuing her education on the Western Michigan University campus in Kalamazoo, where she will be studying in Aerospace Engineering, yet another non-traditional field for a young lady in today's world of modern technology.

### **MOCC Continuity of Learning Plan**

MOCC staff members are now into their second week of fully implementing our Continuity of Learning Plan (CLP). Prior to

that, staff members were hard at work collaborating in the development of our plan. Our first and foremost priority is the physical and emotional well-being of our students. Moreover, we understand that in addition to the uncertainty of these unprecedented times, students' varying capabilities and limitations regarding access to the internet compound the challenges we face in implementing distance learning. Accordingly, our teachers have been communicating with students in an effort to identify and remove as many barriers to success as possible.

In short, our plan is a hybrid approach utilizing online and printed materials based on each student's needs. Students with individualized education plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plans will continue to receive all appropriate accommodations and modifications to the extent possible. No student will be penalized for an inability to participate fully. For students requiring packets, we are working with local districts to coordinate the delivery or pick-up of these materials to coincide with the district's plan.

Students who were satisfactorily progressing toward earning an industry-recognized credential prior to March 16th will still have that opportunity; however, this may require a student to complete clinical hours or proctored assessments after June 30th since these activities are currently prohibited. It may also require additional coursework above and beyond what is required of students not pursuing certification. Students in dual enrollment or early/middle college classes are required to complete those additional requirements as well.

I'm very proud of the MOCC staff members for how they've risen to the challenge and adapted their practice to meet the needs of our students. We will continue to take this approach as we plan and prepare for what comes next. In the words of former president

Theodore Roosevelt, "Do what you can with what you have where you are." Or, in the words of one of my former commanders, "Semper Gumby!"

## General Education

### Director of General Education Tonya Harrison Reports:

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

We are definitely in an interesting time in education. The general education department is working to stay on top of changes and support the local schools where we can in this new environment. After the Executive Order ending face to face instruction, I began working with my state affiliation groups on creating a document to support schools and administrators, as they built their Continuity of Learning Plans. I also assisted Mr. Locke as our local plans were sent to him. Plans were reviewed, with feedback provided, prior to submission. Our directors have also been supported, as they wrote their plans.

The general education team is currently working on a "repository" of resources and learning opportunities for teachers, para-educators, administrators, and parents. The goal is to provide a place for them to look for ideas, articles, and resources for their meetings and classrooms. The short-term plan is to provide resources for the current learning situation, with a long-term goal of creating an online "resource catalogue" that the general education team will continually update. It will serve as an addition to our Shared Library, which focuses on professional books and classrooms and book sets for teachers.

**Early Literacy:**

Amy Posey has continued to work on the Early Literacy Task Force. They are working on an “onboarding” process for new literacy coaches. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, our ISD was scheduled to hire two additional literacy coaches. The state recently increased the amount of money in the early literacy “fund” within the state aid budget. However, due to the recent events, the MOISD is holding off on the hiring of additional literacy coaches, as we wait for the new budget to be released.

**Math/Science:**

Justin Fox has been supporting the CTE teachers, and special education team with Zoom and Google Classroom supports. All local districts have been contacted for support in these areas, in addition to Khan Academy, which many districts are using in their COL Plans. Justin has been leading instructional learning “sessions” on these topics. He is also continuing to work with his state math/science consultant group.

**Behavioral Specialist/Mental Health Supports:**

Michael Bausano and Beth Bond have been participating in numerous online professional learning opportunities through the CHAMPS organization. Michael has been in contact with RCAPS in regards to future PBIS learning and is following up with the Education Center for their needs in regards to behavior support. He is also working on reworking current “trauma” professional learning to incorporate the recent pandemic and its impact on adults, students, and schools. Beth has been in contact with schools that she had been working with, along with Community Mental Health, to continue her work as a liaison.

**Special Education**

**Interim Director of Special Education-Planner/Monitor Christy Miller:**

In the world of special education, the last six-plus weeks since the closure of schools has been spent thinking about how we can do our best to meet the needs of students and families. Efforts to meet these needs are not only focused on those outlined in the student's IEP, but also the needs of the student and their family. From the start, we knew that we wanted any solution to providing services to be family-focused and approached in a way that takes into account the challenges our families are facing during this time.

As recommended by the Michigan Department of Education, the MOISD devised a Contingency Learning Plan (CLP) format with stakeholder input, including local supervisors, itinerants, and ISD teaching staff. The contingency learning plan is a plan that outlines the district's best faith effort to meet the needs of the student as outlined in their IEP. Assists students in engaging in their district's continuity of learning plan, and helps to meet the basic needs of the family during this time of distance learning. The CLP is created by the primary service provider in consultation with the parent and related service providers. The CLPs were completed in the majority of districts last week and have started with implementation.

Across the ISD, we hear of exciting and creative new approaches to delivering education, including the use of online learning platforms, teletherapy, hard copy

materials, using social media, phone, text, and others. Staff across the ISD are doing an exceptional job of collaborating with one another to ensure that students continue to get the best services possible. Although this time is challenging for everyone, I am incredibly proud of how ALL staff and districts have come together to create a plan to deliver services and support to our students and families!

### Special Education Supervisor Jenny Knopf Reports:

#### Everyone Together!!!

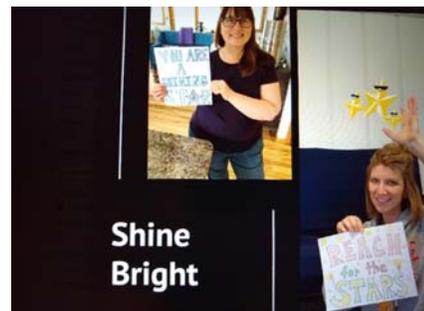
Thank you to our head of transportation, Karlene Rader, her amazing crew of drivers, and all the super staff who helped with deliveries. Bus deliveries consisting of work packets, Chromebooks, and other essential items went out on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and May 7<sup>th</sup>.



Thank you to our outstanding tech department, which continues to work hard, ensuring Chromebooks are ready and available for students to access online learning.



A huge thank you to social worker Christi Waldman for organizing this amazing way to keep in touch with students. These pictures are shared with students on Google Classroom and classroom FB pages!



### Special Education Supervisor Pat Craven Reports:

The US 10 Corridor Schools have enjoyed the unique task of working to provide educational services to the youth under their care during the COVID-19 mandated shut down of schools. Our school staff began collaborating immediately to develop solid plans around providing all students

with appropriate and adequate access to packet learning materials and online learning opportunities. Teachers and para-educators developed subject-specific teams and created ability-level material for students to engage in their learning process. Our teams of educators have also utilized the online meeting platform, Zoom, to collaborate with students during their two to three-hour learning blocks. They have remained in constant communication with facility-level case managers and administrators.

Prior to students attending their online classes, teachers and para-educators are collaborating in professional learning communities to work through “best practices” of our delivery system at this time. Teachers continue to create contingency learning plans that work to move alongside IEPs so that student growth and progress toward goals and objectives can be identified and monitored. Our transition coordinators continue to provide secondary transition materials to our students and work with facility transition workers to provide needed information for students as they prepare to exit the facilities. Para-educators also use the Zoom platform to provide further assistance to students during online curriculum work or during scheduled one on one meetings with students and facility case managers.

The work continues on the US 10 Corridor. Students continue to progress toward high school diploma requirements and GED certification. In fact, we anticipate one more graduation this spring and have already concluded the GED certification process for another student. We are proud to continue to serve the students in our care and partner with facility and community leadership.

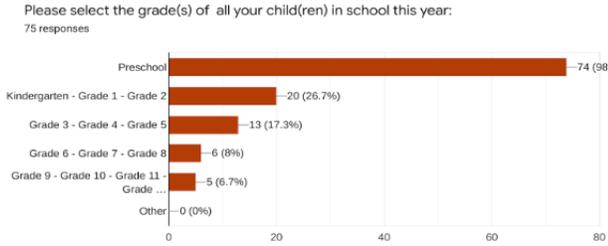
## Special Projects

### Director of Special Projects Karen Roy Reports:

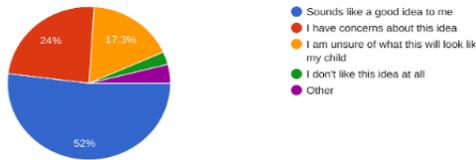
Spring has maybe finally arrived for good-- at least the weather is shaping up! We are sad that we are not able to bring all our families and students together for the end of the year carnival/picnic and other celebrations, but are doing our best to ease these disappointments. Our preschool programs will come to an end on May 22, 2020, ending a year like no other, ever! The staff truly rose to the challenge of continuing to stay connected and to keep their students learning using a variety of venues and methods. They truly stretched themselves and their repertoire of skills. We will continue to support their skill growth in these areas. We are looking forward to having time together to reflect on what transpired in these last COVID-19 weeks and use what we learn to plan for the future.

We invited our GSRP families (160) to complete a survey about technology, connectivity, usage, and perception of learning at home. Technology Director, Fred Sharpsteen provided us with the survey questions. We had 77 respondents, and you can see the results [here](#). We have been moving too fast to spend time analyzing this data. Still, it is on our radar to spend time with this data along with data we are collecting from staff regarding their interactions with families/students and all that they learned about teaching during this time.

**Speak Up Snapshot Poll Results**



What is your general perception of the idea of your child "going to school from home" using computers, online resources, and the Internet to sustain learning while school is closed: (Select one)  
75 responses



Enrollment for the 2020-21 year is underway! Prior to COVID-19, we hosted events, met families face-to-face, and attend community celebrations to enroll and recruit families. Our recruitment strategies are changing, and our actual enrollments are all being done over the phone with families emailing, faxing, taking pictures of required documents. We are facing another year of not being able to tell families they are enrolled until late as we have to wait for the budget processes to play out. At this time, there is not an anticipated decrease to our allocations; however, having a final signed budget in Lansing is a long way off, so we will patiently wait as our Executive and Legislative branches hammer out the details.

We were awarded \$20,000 for each county through the Trusted Advisors' Grant. These funds will be used to offer additional Mom Power and expand Talking as Teaching throughout the two counties. Our first grant was so successful; they were happy to let us have additional dollars for each county to continue and expand the great work that

has begun! Kudos to Jessica Wimmer and community members of the Great Start Collaborative along with Tricia Smith-Bennett and the members of the Parent Coalition for their work to make these projects successful.

Working with a small team of McKinney-Vento Homeless Grant Coordinators from across the state, with the help of McKinney-Vento.org LLC, we have launched a community platform for all homeless liaisons in the state. This platform allows us to build upon our community of practice and learn from and grow with each other as we work to serve our homeless students and unaccompanied homeless youth across the state. We are looking at connecting with other platforms to expand the use of this tool to allow for the hosting of virtual conferences, have meetings within the community, and share documents through a vetted repository. The more we interact with each other through this medium, the more potential we see in how it can transform the work we are doing in the homeless arena. We will not be hosting an annual homeless conference this year as too many unknowns exist. I am exploring the possibility of using this platform to host a virtual conference. Stay tuned!

Happy Mother's Day to you and yours! Thanks for your continued support!

**Technology**

**Director of Technology Fred Sharpsteen Reports:**

The technology team has had to pivot with the COVID-19 event. We are now

supporting staff and students remotely. We were in an excellent place to move to a remote support situation with the systems that we have had in place. The following are some examples of the systems and the success stories.

**Wi-fi access for Reed City Public Schools students:**

In the picture below, the small white square about the blue ladder is the wi-fi access point, which helps students without access to the Internet.



**Zoom conference portal:** This tool allows the remote face to face meetings to connect with staff, parents, and students. We have created over 80 accounts in the last three weeks.

**Google Classrooms:** This is part of the Google Suite and ties teacher's tools and students directly together.

**Screen Connect remote connection system:** With this tool, we can connect from anywhere in the world, with the user having difficulty with their system.

**Mitel phone system:** We were able to forward calls to the MOISD phone system to the staff member's cellphone or landline so that staff can connect seamlessly. We are looking at other ways to extend the

phone system if this event is to go on past the end of the school year.

**School Messenger:** This is an integrated system with Skyward that allows quick communication with phone calls, text messages, and emails to families in the Skyward system.

**Skyward:** Used to maintain student records and help with communication of the families and students from anywhere with an Internet connection.

**Edgenuity Learning:** Remote online learning that is done in an asynchronous learning environment so the students can learn anytime and anywhere learning.

**MiDataHubs:** System is passing information into many systems with automation and no added user intervention.

**Finance System Access over VPN Services:** We have set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN) service for business office functions that allow them to work remotely at home as if they are sitting in the office.

**Devices to students of need:** We help ready and distribute Chromebooks, Mac computers, and laptops to students that need these types of devices.

**Online ticket system:** Staff and students can enter a ticket 24 hours a day. Office calls not answered directly go into voice messages that are added into the ticket system.

Here is a breakdown of the types of support requests we've received in the past 30 days:

- 14% Zoom
- 11% phone setup to get calls in remote offices and homes
- 8% Data Center and updates
- 7% printing
- 60% student logins, Internet issues offsite, or how to use a product and other misc.

The technology team is closing 35% of tickets within one hour or less of the request. We are closing 63% of tickets in eight hours or less, with only 3% taking longer than 24 hours. Many of these types of requests are more significant projects.

I could not be more thankful for the technology team of Mike Schonert, Rose Kipfmiller, and Ryan Boochard. Their dedicated work to support students and staff in this unprecedented time goes above and beyond. They work tirelessly to make sure the staff has what they need to help make the student learning possible.

### **Challenges:**

Our first challenge is getting Internet connections available to all students at all LEAs and the MOISD. The lack of broadband is a challenge that we are working on at both state national levels. The state and federal government are asking schools to open up wi-fi connections at schools for families without the Internet at home. We have completed this, but it still is not meeting the need for equitable learning for all students.

Another issue is that homes are without technology devices or have too few

devices for the number of students in their household.

The following is from the Quello MoonShot report, which included Morley Stanwood Community Schools. The numbers in the report were completed in March of 2020.

### **Why No Internet Access?**

A lack of broadband Internet connectivity is a function of the absence of infrastructure – no broadband service providers or limited competition – and socioeconomic factors, such as income. In the fifteen predominantly rural school districts included in this study, those students who lived in more isolated areas were less likely to have the Internet at home. When they did have Internet access, students in small towns and rural areas were more likely to depend on slow access or access through a cell phone.

- 53% of students who live in a small town or rural areas had fast Internet access, compared to 77% of those who live in the suburbs, and 70% of those in cities.
- An additional 25% of small-town and rural students had slower home access, compared to 11% in the suburbs, and 13% in cities.
- Students who relied only on their cell phones for Internet access include 15% of small-town and rural students, 9% of suburban students, and 12% of students in cities.

The secondary hurdle is access to devices for students that are in poverty. Recently, I have had some teachers and parents write to me to thank us for working to close in on this issue. Many are now dubbing this as the "homework gap".