

***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:**

#### **Public Safety Programs Thrive Despite COVID Challenges:**

*Submitted by Matt Kidd and Joy Paquette*

This year has been very interesting, to say the least. We are very fortunate to have 16 area recruits in both the Fire and EMT programs. They are very driven and determined not to let the challenges surrounding COVID-19 prevent them from achieving success in their last year at the MOCC.

I believe our biggest challenge so far, being out of the class for extended periods of time, has proven to bring out our biggest strength. The recruits are very frustrated with the 10, 14, and 21 day periods of having to be out of class, yet they will not let that stop their learning. Every day they are logged on for class without prompting. When assigned to video a skill check-off, they do so without question. I feel this has been very beneficial for the school because they include their parents as patients that need to be assessed or victims that need to be found and rescued.



*Fire Academy Students training at the Big Rapids Fire Department*

Below are some highlights and some challenges that we have faced and overcome.

#### **FIRE ACADEMY** *(Matt Kidd)*

- We were able to tour the Mecosta County Jail, after completing the class's Building Construction portion. The recruits were able to identify the type of building construction and the fire suppression system utilized in the jail. This was a great addition to the program and for real-world application of class knowledge. The recruits were also able to appreciate the complexities that a fire in a jail would cause vs. any other occupied structure.
- The recruits have learned to appreciate the slogan, "Hard work is the only shortcut," after finishing the Search and Rescue portion of the class.
- We took delivery of a 40 ft. Bangor Ladder from a department on the east side of the state. This was a free donation a local Chief arranged for our program.
- I am looking forward to having this style ladder as a training tool, as it is the only one in the area. It is also very heavy and will make an excellent team-building exercise.
- We have been able to host the Big Rapids Fire Dept. outside a few times to demonstrate the proper use of the equipment

and some skills check-offs; we will be utilizing them more as the course continues.



Both Fire Academy and Diesel Technology Students learn about a fire engine from the City of Big Rapids

### EMT ACADEMY (Matt Kidd)

- There has been a lot of upfront learning on the part of the EMT recruits. We are now into a lot of skills check-offs, which they are demonstrating very well.
- We have been collaborating with Mecosta County EMS, and I hope to be able to take the recruits there and to the morgue.
- The recruits have learned to appreciate the slogan, "Hard work is the only shortcut," after finishing the Lifting, Moving, Dragging portion of the class.
- All recruits were very thankful for the equipment investment the school made so they can have at home bags for skills practice.



EMT Students learning how to take blood pressure readings from a sphygmomanometer

### PUBLIC SAFETY FIRST-YEAR PROGRAM

(Joy Paquette)

- It brings about a sense of pride to see the students wearing different PS uniforms and marching down the hall.

- The level of student leadership increases daily. It's encouraging to see students taking command without the instructor's order.
- Although I needed to adjust the PS curriculum order this year to accommodate online learning, it was well worth it! The students did many hands-on learning activities prior to the shutdown. Some of the hands-on activities included: traffic stops, rolling fingerprints, crime scene measurements, sketches, searches, and photography and evidence collection, to name a few.
- We were able to bring in some presenters who met our students outside. The Marines, Army, and DNR were able to come and meet the students, we also took a field trip to the Armory so the students (including Diesel tech) could see the Hummers and learn more about the National Guard. The students loved exploring the military vehicles and learning more about their service. Justin Guernsey (MOCC Public Safety Graduate) was the presenter at the NG, so that was awesome to see him in a full uniform doing something he loves.
- One of the PS female students did her job presentation about wanting to be in the DNR as her dream job, so after her presentation, I contacted our DNR Advisory Member Angie Greenway, and she came over and surprised our student.
- Online has been a bit of a struggle for some students, but we are getting through it. We have been working on resumes, reference pages, cover letters, online job applications, the US Constitution, city ordinances, and career readiness skills.



PS Student meeting Conservation Officer Angie Greenway

## General Education

### Director of General Education Tonya Harrison Reports:

#### The General Ed Team:

We held a successful learning day on January 18th, with Allison Nelson, where approximately 250 Zoom connections between MOISD and Big Rapids Public Schools staff members were connected to the training. Her topics for the day were establishing safety, consistency and prioritizing relationships. Each day of learning provides resources and strategies for all educators. A Google folder is available for all principals with every resource provided by Allison. We have also purchased the books referenced by Allison for the Shared Library, with several being checked out by teachers in the locals. One particular book, Classroom 180, has had enough requests that we have ordered additional copies. Our next day with Allison is on February 12th, with the entire MOISD and all of the locals will participate.

We also had our first successful principal meeting with Allison. Our November meeting was canceled due to COVID, but the meeting on January 26th was held through Zoom. Five different principals shared case studies of students. As a group, we worked through background, classroom/school behaviors and had a great discussion about strategies and supports for each student. Our next principal meeting in March will showcase additional students. The format allows us to learn from Allison and connect the information to our practices.

MICIP is still a big project and learning curve for our local districts. 100% of our

local districts are connected to the platform and to the Data Hubs. We are working with the districts individually to support their work on the new improvement platform. We have several work sessions scheduled in the upcoming weeks. It is a “process,” and our goal is to support their learning “wherever they are,” knowing this is a crazy time to have to learn a brand-new improvement platform.

#### Early Literacy:

Amy has been working as a member of the MI Literacy Coaches team, who collaborated with DPTV- PBS to vet and create literacy content for the Michigan Learning Channel. The MLC is a statewide public television partnership offering instructional standards-aligned content to supplement student learning and provide alternative resources for families and teachers that support school-based instruction. This free programming is being broadcast via special on-air channels established by each of the participating public television stations in Michigan. It is also available as a live stream and stored for on-demand viewing on various digital platforms, ensuring accessibility to all students, teachers, and families across the state [Channel Listing/Schedule](#). In the first year of operation, the channel will focus on Pre-K to 3rd Grade content, starting with reading, English Language Arts, and Social and Emotional Learning. Lessons in Math, Science, and other subjects will follow. The MLC will add additional grade levels and subjects as funding, time, and capacity allow. The channel will strategically engage parents more deeply in their children’s learning, encouraging strong partnerships with teachers and schools. Currently, the MLC is airing Colorado Classroom for K-3 content. Starting March 15th, the channel will be airing *original* content created by/with Michigan coaches and teachers. To learn

more and access  
content: [www.michiganlearning.org](http://www.michiganlearning.org)

### **Math/Science/Technology:**

The MOISD is an ongoing partner in the MiSTEM regional work. Justin participates with other math/science coaches around the state, learning and bringing back opportunities to our local districts. Recently he shared opportunities with our districts for Math Recovery, Cereal City Science Kits (we have one district using this program), and Camp Invention. There are grant funds available for all three of these programs.

Justin is also a resource to all staff within the MOISD in educational technology. His "Ed Tech Talks" are attended by Career Center staff, and last week a special education supervisor asked for a recording of the "Tech Talk" on Google Sites. Virtual learning and technology tools continue to be at the forefront of our education programming.

### **Behavior/Mental Health Supports:**

Michael Bausano continues to work with our community agencies in supporting them as they learn about school districts experiencing traumatic events. He recently provided the Group Crisis Intervention training for local educators and community agency professionals. Fourteen people successfully completed the training. He is also sharing upcoming opportunities with principals about the Individual CISM training that will be provided in May.

Michael was recently awarded the Certified Clinical Trauma Professional certificate and a Certificate of Appreciation from the Mecosta Osceola Community Crisis Response Team.



Michael and Beth are excited regarding the feedback from our initial Zoom meeting in December with Behavior/Mental Health staff. We had participation from five out of six of our local districts and one community agency. Participants were very enthusiastic about being able to network across schools/districts/counties to share what they are doing and share resources. The group opted to meet twice per month via Zoom for the rest of this school year and would like to involve other community agencies along with FSU SSW interns. Michael and I have created a Padlet (<https://bit.ly/Networklink>) to make sharing resources easily accessible...thank you to Amy Posey for assisting with this project.

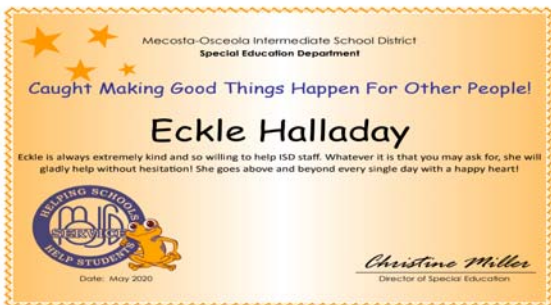
## **Special Education**

### **Director of Special Education Christy Miller Reports:**

This winter I will be highlighting what the special education department is doing this year to improve in each one of our strategic action plan goal areas. Last month I covered communication effectiveness. This month, I'll be talking about how we are focusing on fostering and supporting a positive culture.

### **GOAL 2: Fostering and Supporting a Positive Culture:**

Last year for one of our Board showcases, the special education department shared our Orange Frog initiative. This initiative is aimed at increasing a culture of positivity. As a part of that initiative, we started a practice of delivering “Caught” certificates to recognize local staff who were caught, by our ISD, making good things happen for students and other staff members. Based on feedback, this year, we are continuing the program but are also expanding it to enable ISD staff to recognize the amazing things that our ISD staff is doing as well! Awardees are recognized on our Facebook page and will be noticed on our newly created Twitter account (@MOISDSEteam) and Instagram account (@moisdseteam) as well!



To increase a positive culture with our local community this year, we are continuing to focus on involvement with community organizations, and this year we have special docs on working with the county jails to provide services to students with IEPs who may be located there for some time. The local community also includes parents!! To provide more support for our local parents, we are working hard to provide resources to the PAC and integrate their feedback into our practices.

### Special Education Supervisor Pat Craven Reports:

#### Restorative Justice Circles Thrive on US 10:

For the past three years, teachers and staff along the US 10 Corridor have been implementing the use of restorative justice circles with our students. Circles, an activity intended to build relationships, trust, and character, have been used throughout history in our society and other cultures. Teachers have participated in circles while leading conversations that help kids remain grounded and in a learning frame of mind. Conversations begin with areas such as your favorite food or musician and eventually build into topics around how kids learn and what motivates them to learn. Within the circle, each person is given a voice to offer their thoughts and ideas and have them recognized as important and necessary. These conversations have proven to build community within classrooms and provide students the freedom to exhibit leadership qualities through modeling and offering help.

Teachers and school staff have the ability to show their “human” side so that kids can see them as more than just the person leading their school classroom. Relationships grow, trust builds, and kids succeed. Some in education might argue that there isn’t time for such “fluff.” However, the US 10 Corridor results would argue that schools are missing opportunities to build capacity within their individual classroom communities. The phrase, “Go slow to go fast,” is frequently used as permission is provided for adults to learn and truly know their students. When students feel safe and understood, they unlock that which binds their educational success. They know they have allies, not enemies, within their classroom community and take academic risks that lead to student growth. Circles are the tool used to build the foundation for relationships and

trust that will propel our kids to succeed in school.

### **Special Education Supervisor Jenny Knopf Reports:**

Students continue to work hard and make strides towards their individual goals. The staff remains flexible and creative when meeting students' academic, functional, and emotional needs.

During the two-week time of remote learning from January 18<sup>th</sup>- January 28<sup>th</sup>, over 148 bags of food and gallons of milk were delivered to Education Center students. In addition, learning packets and materials were also distributed. Thank you to the office staff, paraprofessionals, and our amazing transportation team, including Karlene Rader, for making this happen. Thank you to Big Rapids Food Director Jane Devries for her assistance in bringing needed food to so many students and families.

February is when we start looking forward to a couple of fun upcoming events at the Education Center, such as the "100<sup>th</sup>" day of school and March is Reading Month. The staff have already begun planning various learning activities for students.



*A middle school Student Reading with a para*



*A student in elementary MOCI class washing after breakfast.*

*Respectfully Submitted by Jenny Knopf*

### **Special Education Supervisor for Evert Public Schools and Planner/Monitor Ayla Lockhart Reports:**

We are jumping into the new year with some new personal learning opportunities. We are offering special education staff and administration an opportunity to participate in a virtual High-Quality IEP professional learning opportunity. This will take place in February and will be two half-day sessions. It will be focused on compliance and best practices to improve student outcomes.

In March and April on several dates, we will host, and are currently planning for, virtual Ed Benefit Reviews. We have offered this in the past and are cycling back this year. This practice is also a professional learning opportunity that is guided but discovery focused for participants to make connections and draw conclusions.

We are thankful to that state for relieving some nervousness regarding timelines and compliance during COVID. This helped districts look at practices to prepare for if we get into that situation again, vs. giving out CAPS and paperwork. All are grateful for the time. We continue to work together to build guidance and support as we hear or see potential concerns brewing. We are thankful to be back and to be with kids!

### **Special Education Supervisor of MOISD Satellite Programs & Big Rapids Public Schools Cheryl Wright Reports:**

Our K-8 Big Rapids satellite programs at Riverview and BRMS have been busy doing mid-year proficiency

assessments. Overall, students have shown progress despite closures and quarantines. The staff at these programs have worked hard to address students' academic and social-emotional needs, no matter the setting.

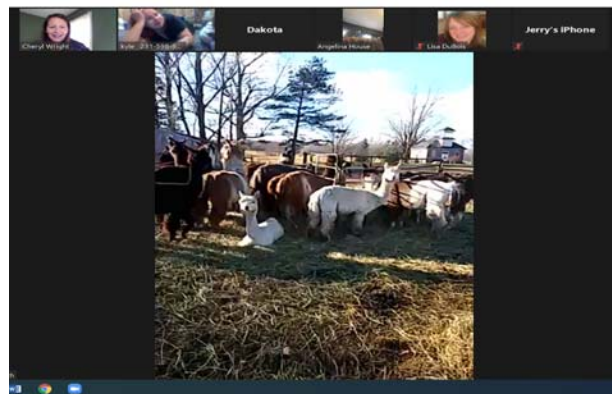
The Early Childhood Special Education Program has been able to remain open all year thus far. They've been excited to see students gain language, as well as increase engagement and independence.

Now that we're entering the second half of our school year, the ECSEP staff is differentiating instruction to include kindergarten skills for students ready to transition for the next school year. The ECSEP and Riverview staff recently met to collaborate by sharing strategies and discussing high priority areas to help students be successful as they move from early childhood to elementary school.

**Virtual Learning with Llamas:**

When the students at the EI Program at BRMS shifted to virtual learning, just before Christmas, the teacher, Denise Fehrenbach, found a unique way to bring them together as a class. Mrs. Fehrenbach owns a llama and alpaca farm. She organized a virtual field trip to share this with her students over Zoom. Students enjoyed asking lots of questions, such as the names of the animals and how to take care of them. As Mrs. Fehrenbach braved the outdoors on this cold and windy day to tour the farm with students, she explained to them that many of the llamas are show animals and showed ribbons they had won over the years. She also explained the process of shearing and how the fibers are used to make yarn and felt. The students really enjoyed this opportunity to build relationships with one another, work on

turn-taking, and use social skills as they chatted back and forth.



**Special Projects**

**Director of Special Projects Karen Roy Reports:**

In December, we received a shipment of books (several cases of about a dozen titles) and backpacks (600) from Feed the Children--2,638 pounds of freight. Thanks to Chris Royer and his crew for unloading the truck and helping to unwrap the pallets. The items are currently being distributed to liaisons in our Homeless Grant consortium, and then they will be shared with other regional Homeless Grant Coordinators that are adjacent to us.



Wexford-Missaukee ISD has been most helpful in getting items to their member districts and couriered over to Manistee as they share the same superintendent. We will be sharing this shipment with Montcalm Area ISD as well, and they will be coming to pick up their items in the next couple of weeks.

All our classrooms are now back to face-to-face, and staff could not be more thrilled. They were so excited to resume "normalish" operations and see their kids in person. . . .there was all the excitement of the first day of school for everyone. They are working hard to ensure we can stay that way!

Our family engagement team is working on rolling out more activities for families to join together to create and participate in Valentine/Literacy/math/science activities and crafts. This was very well received when we did this during December, and we are hoping it helps us all get through these winter months when it is difficult to get out and do things in public spaces as a family. All activity materials will be sent home, and families can do them independently or join in with others on our

Facebook events and share their creations.

Through the Trusted Advisors Grant, we will be partnering with Angels of Action to create a "Hub" that will be a place for families looking for services and supports. Families will be able to get personal, one-to-one assistance navigating systems and getting connected to formal and informal community supports to help their families thrive. We will continue to provide Mom Power and Talking as Teaching using funds from our Trusted Advisors Grants for both Mecosta and Osceola counties for 2021. We have several families and "Trusted Advisor" agencies that have taken on or are supporting these initiatives. We will be able to look to the next projects (based on community need and parent voice) for future Trusted Advisor Grant opportunities. Jessica Wimmer and Tricia Smith-Bennett are the powerhouses behind these projects, influencing others to join, lead and champion these efforts.

Kalee and Fred have been busy working on getting this Spring Early Childhood collection entered. This is an important collection, as the information submitted during this period will be used to provide families with P-EBT benefits (Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer) based on data submitted. Additional data submission dates will collect information about educational service delivery, which will impact the amount of funding eligible families receive, but this count is the foundation. I appreciate all the effort they have put into making sure we have a good submission!

A few of us are going to do a book study around the book [Upstream: The Quest to Solve Problems Before they Happen](#) . If you are interested in joining us, let me



know. I have linked the title to Amazon, so you can grab a copy and join us! The more, the merrier!

Thanks for your continued support!  
Happy Valentines' Day!

## Technology

### Director of Technology Fred Sharpsteen Reports:

#### MI-Connect Funds for MOISD LEAs:

We have completed the coordination of the MI-Connect state funds. The total funding for the MOISD area ended up being **\$148,361**. We are now awaiting to see if other regions did not spend all their money. We are ready to request more money if the MI-Connect team has more money to allocate for distribution. Thank you to Jennifer Vidak and her team for answering LEA business manager questions and helping me out with this process.

#### Opportunities and Challenges

We reached out to one of the two electrical cooperatives in the area to discuss their fiber to the home projects. I believe working with local Internet providers will be a key to closing the homework gap. No one provider covers all of the school districts in the Mecosta Osceola ISD service area, so we would be working with multiple providers and types of connections to be able to reach every home. This could be a symbiotic relationship between the schools and all the different providers if it's done in the right manner. If there was a good business model for corporate companies to make money in the rural parts of Michigan, they would have already built fiber to these areas. Home Works Tri-County Electric Cooperative is building fibers in the counties south of Mecosta County and has

plans online showing current coverage areas as well as expected future growth. They feel our county is a strong candidate for this project and they are excited to build in the region. The challenge is keeping this in front of the legislators and government organizations at the federal, state, and local levels. This issue of home connections will not go away with COVID-19. It may just not be as noticeable to them.

#### MiDataHubs:

Michigan DataHub is a project where student information system data is gathered. This data may be student demographics, student assessments, or other forms of data from the districts. After data is moved to MiDataHub, the schools can use this data to make student informed decisions. One example of this is MiCIP, which is now replacing the School Improvement System. This is important because to get quality information from these systems; you have to have accurate data going into the systems. We will be working to provide training opportunities to office staff on systems data entry and the process. This is called Data Governance. It is a big word that encompasses staff's roles in entering data, what data needs to be collected, what systems data needs to be imputed in, and it can be used in other systems without entering the data into all the systems a second time. We are one of the smaller ISDs, but with the expertise in this data work, we are regularly asked to help with initial testing that the state needs to ensure it is working well before bringing all schools on board. This would not be possible without the help of Joe Bouman at Big Rapids Public Schools and their school district's support.