

*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:**

#### **MOCC Staff Members and Students Rising to the Challenge**

We knew this school year was going to be very different from any other year due to COVID. I am happy to report that the MOCC team has done a great job adapting to meet these challenges head-on. Here are a few of the highlights.

We have our first student out for work-based learning! Lowell Clark, a second-year Welding student from Ewart, is working at Midstate Fabrication in Barryton. He is working four days a week and coming to class one day a week.

Staff members are taking all of the accommodations, schedule, and routine changes in stride. Although most students are attending five days a week, some are in a hybrid model due to several circumstances. For some, it's due to assisting with younger siblings for districts not holding face-to-face classes five days a week. For others, it may be transportation on those days. Due to large numbers in Allied Health, we worked with the local district guidance counselors to identify students who were enrolled that were in a position to be successful in a hybrid model. These eight

students are remote four days a week and face-to-face one day a week for their hands-on tasks.

Although not open to the public, our student-run salon and restaurant are operating at a reduced capacity with limited service to staff and students.



*Guinevere Walczewski from Big Rapids shows off her mushroom pasta*

## **General Education**

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

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

School has started, and our work is continuing for the local school districts. In addition to our regular work with local schools, planning and facilitating ISD wide professional development is occurring. On August 24, Allison Nelson, from The Developmental Enhancement Behavioral

Health team, provided a full day of learning to the entire MOISD and all the local districts. Everyone from teachers, bus drivers, para- professionals, and administrators participated in the learning. Allison's focus is trauma-informed classroom strategies. Day one focused on a review of what trauma is and how it impacts brain development. She will return for four more full days of learning, along with attending all five of the principal meetings throughout the school year. Her next topics will range from how to structure the learning environment to prioritizing relationships and supporting emotional regulation. Allison was on campus for our first day, and the learning was "zoomed" out to over 149 locations throughout our ISD. The entire general education team is working to embed Allison's learning into our other supports for the local teachers. These trainings are free to all the local districts, as we are paying for Allison's services with 31-N funds.

In addition to the professional learning planning, I have been working to keep our locals up to date with all the supporting documents for the start of the school year. MDE has been sending an enormous number of memos explaining the Return to Learn legislation and the various Executive Orders. I am working to keep the local principals and curriculum directors up to date on the 3rd grade reading law, the newly required benchmark assessments, and changes to pupil accounting. Principals and teachers are overwhelmed with the information coming at them daily, and my goal is to share out details that are relevant and "bulleted" in easy to read formats.

#### **Early Literacy:**

As important as early literacy is to our students and schools, many teachers are focused more on getting their instruction under control in this new teaching environment. Amy Posey, our literacy

coach, is creating opportunities for our early elementary teachers to contact her and receive coaching and feedback through zoom or in person contact. She is planning the Literacy Leadership Support team meetings to provide ongoing support for the Essential Practices in Early Literacy. Amy is also continuing to support our HIL schools by attending the HIL trainings for mentors.

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

Justin Fox has had a busy start to the school year. With a majority of the school districts, including the MOISD, using Google Classroom, Justin has been spending time with local teachers preparing for how to use Google Classroom. In addition to using Google classroom, he has been showing teachers how to use a variety of "videotaping" methods, allowing teachers to videotape themselves, so their online students can see the teacher and get the "lessons" from their actual teacher. Justin has spent time with the teachers in Evart, our career center, and teachers from the special education team. He anticipates spending more time in Evart, especially with the elementary school team, who said, "please be ready to come back and help us!"

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

Michael Bausano and Beth Bond have held training for CPI recertification and TCIS. Local teachers, administrators, and MOISD staff have all participated in the learning opportunities. There are CPI trainings planned for each month. Beth and Michael are also supporting the special education team with resilience supports called Peer Resiliency Support. This group is a peer-led program to meet the needs of staff through information modules that explore, review, and discuss resiliency concepts and techniques. Michael and Beth will provide video modules and support

modules for the volunteer facilitators. Participation is voluntary and will allow staff to work together. Self-care is crucial to supporting our students, especially in times of trauma, including teaching and supporting students in our current teaching times.

New connections are also being made with our local CMH. Beth has arranged to have CMH attend our next principal meeting, with the goal of making the “face to face” connections with our principals and sharing resources with our schools.

## Special Education

### Director of Special Education Christy Miller:

As always, this fall came with several changes to our special education team! Some staff moved from one program/ location, and others are totally new additions to our team!

#### Our new staff this year include-

- Jessica Windquist, Satellite Paraprofessional
- Tammy Riley, Teacher Consultant
- Celeste Belcher-Girard, MOEC Secretary
- Brittney Heikkila, School Psychologist
- Mandy Burley, MOEC Paraprofessional
- Olivia Martin, SLP

We have a couple of new additions who are slated, to begin with, us in the coming weeks, but who have not joined us yet. By the time we meet again next month, we will have a new US-10 teacher added to our crew as well as an Early on SLP!

#### Other Staff Changes-

As I mentioned, a few staff changed responsibilities and can be found serving the MOISD and local districts in new capacities.

Dana Boglasrsky, previously MOEC secretary, is now at the Admin building as a school psychologist secretary and special education secretary. Dana will be assisting the psych’s in scheduling REEDs, METs, and IEP team meetings as well as managing paperwork. This new position is designed to help relieve the psych’s of some of their secretarial responsibilities and allow them more time to work with students. This new system also includes caseload oversight to help maintain manageable caseloads for psychologists. As we know, school psychologists are not always easy to find, so we want to make sure that we are assisting them in spending as much time as possible with students and supporting districts.

With Dana leaving the Education Center, Audrey Kitzmiller has stepped into the role as head secretary at MOEC.

#### The special education admin team has also seen some changes this year.

Ayla Lockhart was hired as our planner/ monitor and special education supervisor for Evert Public Schools through the MOP COOP. Ayla previously worked for Reed City Public Schools as their special education coordinator. We are excited to have Ayla on our team and to be able to help support Evert in this way!

Cheryl Wright started this week also in a shared time capacity. Cheryl will be overseeing the MOISD satellite programs located in Big Rapids and will also be serving as MOP COOP supervisor for Big Rapids Public Schools. Cheryl previously taught at CCA for several years. We are excited about the extensive classroom

experience that she will be bringing to her position!

Our returning supervisors experienced a little bit of change as well.

Pat Craven is now supervising our satellite program at GT Norman Elementary. Pat is also helping to temporarily support Reed City Area Public Schools as they search for a new special education supervisor.

Jaime Knape's role shifted as well as she is taking on all itinerants and continuing in the role of coach for local district looking to possibly place students in a MOISD program. This is a role that she started informally last year, and is continuing in a more official capacity this year.

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

#### **US 10 Corridor Celebrates Student Success!**

Thursday, September 3rd, students, teachers, facility staff, and MOISD staff gathered to celebrate another successful GED completion for a student at Youth Opportunity Ewart Academy (formerly Muskegon River Youth Home). The socially distanced gathering brought together students who are striving to complete high school graduation requirements or GED requirements and honored the successes of a fellow student. Mr. Seager worked diligently, along with many of our teaching and title staff, to prepare this young man for testing. While the process slowed a bit during our school shut down, our team quickly developed a revised plan to assist our student. He successfully completed the GED program with "College Ready" achievement and now is preparing for college entrance.

Congratulations to ALL members of the team and to this young man!

#### **US 10 Partners with Local Businesses:**

Local businesses have been outstanding in their support of celebrating successes of our at-risk populations on the US 10 Corridor. Recently, Mr. Seager thanked Ewart Wesco/Subway for their generous support and donation of food for our GED completion celebration. Pictured is Pete Seager, MOISD GED Coordinator and Amy Kitchen, Wesco/Subway Manager. Thank you Amy and Wesco/Subway of Ewart!



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

Things are off to a great start here at the Education Center. Staff and students have adapted very well to the changes that are a part of the 2020-2021 school year. Staff is teaching and practicing classroom and school procedures. Including safety procedures such as handwashing and social distancing. Students have missed staff, and the staff has missed the students, and we are happy to back together again!

A huge shout out to the amazing maintenance and tech staff who worked



tirelessly throughout the summer to get building and rooms ready for the first day of school! Also, I want to thank Karlene Rader, head of transportation, and her hardworking staff for being such a positive first point of contact for our students.

We are thrilled to welcome new staff members to the Ed Center team. We are excited to welcome our new secretary, Celeste Belcher-Girard, to our building. She joins Audrey Kitzmiller in the office. We are also happy to welcome Mandy Burley as a para in the Elementary MOCI classroom. Sheana Aug joins our adult transition program as a para, and Sarah Molenaar is the new para in the downtown adult transition center. A lot of changes, but we are excited about this 2020-2021 school year! We are also fortunate to have all our itinerant staff members back from last year. So many friendly and familiar faces to welcome students back!



*A student enjoying mother nature!*



*A student is working on counting skills.*



*A teacher works with a student on a social distancing coloring page.*



*New hallway bulletin board designed by staff.*



*Students enjoying a little Wii bowling!*



*A student creating with purple play-dough!*



*Respectfully submitted by Jenny Knopf*

## Special Projects

### Director of Special Projects Karen Roy Reports:

This week marks our first days for our GSRP preschoolers! While numbers are down, they have blossomed nicely in the past week. We have chosen to close one classroom at Eastwood and one at Weidman until numbers increase in those areas. The staff in these classrooms have been reassigned to open positions, rather than hire new folks at this time. We are

also stepping into virtual preschool with both feet! Staff working on this have until October 1, 2020, to have lessons built through Christmas break. We currently have 12 children on the list for this program, and as long as virtual programming is an option in their local district, we are also allowed to offer this option. Should we need or the parents opt to move to face-to-face, we will work to transition them back into an open space in their local classroom.

We have until the February count to fill our classrooms unless there is a legislative remedy for GSRP, similar to what they have done for K-12 programs. We are awaiting some guidance, budget decisions, and amendments to the boilerplate language in our authorizing legislation. The staff is excited and a bit nervous to begin their year with all the new procedures. Rooms have been emptied of many items that are more difficult to sanitize or that took up space needed to help social distance students as much as is practicable in a preschool classroom.

Mom Power--virtual style has been a big success. U of M will be doing a write up on this pilot in one of their journals in the near future. I will pass it along when we get a published copy. There is now a Mom Power for teachers--a much shorter version than for moms. Our GSRP staff will begin their training this month. We are anxious to hear how they feel it will impact their interactions with students and families.

A big thanks to our Technology Department, who has been working with me all summer to ensure we were ready with technology surveys, devices, and technology agreements. These will ensure that our families can utilize our new tools at drop off/pick up, which includes a COVID

screening for their preschoolers. They also are working with our team so we can provide virtual coaching--in the moment--to reduce the number of different people going into the buildings and moving from classroom to classroom. This option does not eliminate classroom observations, but we are hopeful that it will be an efficient way to do more coaching and observations without disrupting classroom time. It seems to be the year to do things a bit differently and learn new skills.

Our communities continue to experience a childcare shortage. Most centers have opened back up, but we have lost some childcare homes, which contributes to the lack of placements for children, particularly infants and toddlers. As you may recall, ISDs were called in early in the COVID crisis to shore up current providers or possibly open buildings for essential workers' children. Luckily we did not have to open up. We have received around a dozen calls--including formal inquiries through the Help Me Grow (211) process set up by the state. All were provided with information to help them access licensed care. We were also able to help out a large child care center in Reed City that was unable to secure gloves. Most of what we did was provide current providers with a bit of emotional support through phone call check-ins and just providing a listening ear as they struggled through the thick of the crisis. Now we need to move into a recruitment mode and work on supporting folks who may be interested in providing licensed care in this community. Maybe that mom who has decided to keep her child home this year would be interested in taking in a couple of kids to help supplement income and provide a safe, learning environment for another child or two? Who knows?!

Thanks for your continued support!

## Technology

### Director of Technology Fred Sharpsteen Reports:

The technology team has started the year out strong and is helping teachers and staff meet the learning needs of students at the MOISD and LEAs.

#### **August 24<sup>th</sup> - Opening Day PD with LEAs and MOISD Staff:**

We were given a challenge to help with a Professional Development (PD) day that was originally scheduled to be held in a large auditorium.

Training that would normally take place in-person in an auditorium with a thousand or more seats, had to be adapted to be a virtual event instead. The general education and technology departments went to work on meeting this challenge. After a couple planning sessions with Tonya Harrison and the technology team, a plan was developed using Zoom in multiple rooms throughout the MOISD and LEA school buildings. This event went off without a hitch or, what some people might call, a technology glitch. This event included 152 Zoom rooms across six school districts with 500+ staff members. This adds up to more than 3000 hours of PD training. We will follow this same format for the trauma training events that will be happening over the next 12 months as well.





*(Zoom session at one of the 152 Zoom rooms)*

This was a huge feat that was accomplished through great teamwork between departments.

On the day of the event, we found out that there was a widespread Zoom outage. We were not affected by the outages since we had the Zoom rooms set up in the system ahead of the training day.

Zoom was down for four hours as a result of many school districts in the U.S. having their first day on August 24th. The following day, August 25th, was MOISD-wide PD day with all of the departments meeting simultaneously in nine different sessions. After opening with Mr. Locke's welcome session, the departments broke into nine Zoom sessions that included over 200 staff members.

**Wi-Fi access for local schools:**

Below is a picture of Mike Schonert helping install a radio access point at Big Rapids Public Schools. The fiber optics network cable was cut to the virtual learning center, making this a necessary task. The installation was complete in a couple of hours, allowing school to start the next week without delay.



*Mike Schonert helping to put in a radio link for Big Rapids Schools*

**Community Wi-Fi access for the north parking lot of the MOCC building:**

We have added an outdoor access point that is open to students, staff, and the community. This unit will be used for students that require an Internet connection if they don't have one at home. It is set up with student safe filtered access to prevent access to unwanted sites. This access point is at the north end parking lot of the Career Center building.

**Opportunities and challenges of remote learning:**

Remote learning has provided an opportunity to get the word out to both the state and nation about the lack of Internet connections for students outside of school. You can hardly turn on the TV or pick up a paper without seeing a news article about the lack of Internet for students at home. This first mission is well underway as simply identifying that this is an issue that is essential to fix. The challenge is finding the resources to address it.

This continues to be a topic high on our list of resources needed for remote learning as we continue on the road of COVID-19. The state has shown great interest in supplying Internet into student's homes and has passed SB690, awarding \$25 million to make this a possibility. This sounds like a lot of money until you divide the amount out. We have 1.5 million students in Michigan. If we look at just the students needing food assistance (free/reduced lunch eligible), that is 750,000 students. Dividing the \$25 million by this number is \$33.00 per student. That is less than the cost of the Internet at



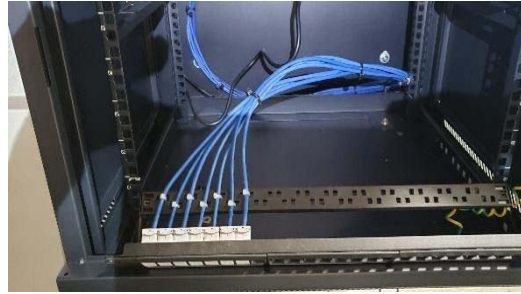
home for one month! The state has more work to do in this area.

A second issue is that homes are without technology devices or have too few devices for the number of students in their household. Just before school started, many school districts were working towards one device to one student ratio. All MOISD school districts are accelerating the purchases for Chromebooks to try to achieve this 1:1 ratio. If this goal is met, we will need better connections from the ISD to the local schools.

A lack of broadband Internet connectivity to the homes is a function of the absence of infrastructure – no broadband service providers in certain regions. A second factor is socioeconomic factors, such as income. We continue to advocate the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for improved access.

### **New equipment and Windows 10 updates:**

This summer was not different than most, even with everything going on in the world. We added new equipment and updated all the old computers from Windows 7 to Windows 10 since Windows 7 will no longer be supported. Rose Kipfmiller handled the majority of the software installs. This work included adding new drives that are faster to give these computers some extended life. Because of the pandemic and business closures, computers have been on three to five months backorders.



*Network Cabinet wiring completed at the downtown Transition Center.*

We helped several LEAs with projects in their network this summer. We helped Reed City Area Public Schools rewire a network cabinet that was in a janitor closet. The cabinet was exposed to chemicals that were eating away at the wiring. We also helped them with a radio link to get a connection out to the football field for graduation.



*Radio links at RCAPS*

### **Fiber optics cable location services:**

As LEAs are getting more fiber optics installed, we are being requested to locate fibers. We had to locate multiple this past summer including at Reed City, Big Rapids and on our MOISD campus.

### **MOP Placements:**

We have three MOP placements at the local schools, including Reed City, Big Rapids, and Ewart. The MOP workers are helping with Level 1 and Level 2 support. They all are doing a great job in helping move education forward.