

MIFFLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

201 Eighth Street - Highland Park
Lewistown, Pennsylvania 17044

TELEPHONE (717) 248-0148

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James A. Estep, Superintendent
Vance S. Varner, Chief Operations Officer Kevin J. O'Donnell, Jr., Chief Academic Officer
Melinda K. Kenepp, Chief Financial Officer

Local Advisory Council
Federal Programs - Mifflin County School District
Thursday, February 4, 2021
10:00 am
Zoom

Minutes

In Attendance: Kelly Campagna, Mark Crosson, Jim Estep, Allison Fisher, Barbara Frankhouser, Erica Hargenrader, Aleta Kammerer, Nikki Knepp, Karin Knode, Martha Leister, Shelby Liebegott, Frank Miller, Kevin O'Donnell, Rose Schulz, Michelle Siruc, Mary Lou Sigler, Vance Varner, Cristy Yoders

- I. Attendance Sign-In and Welcome
 - Mr. Miller thanked everyone for joining the meeting. He continues to hope that the group will be able to meet at the OIP again soon.

- II. Approval of minutes from November 5, 2020
 - Mr. Miller asked attendees to review the minutes from the November 5, 2020 meeting. Mr. Estep made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Ms. Sigler.

- III. Program Review
 - a. Title I, Improving Programs - \$2, 353, 399
 1. Census Poor
 - Mr. Miller was hoping to receive 2019 Census Poor data in time for today's meeting, but the Division of Federal Programs has not yet released the information. If the number increases, there is a good chance that the allocations for Title I, II, III, and IV will also increase.
 - The number increased from 19.01% in 2017 to 20.93% in 2018.
 2. Kindergarten Transition Meetings – February 8-12, 2021
 - Mrs. Marsh has been busy setting up the kindergarten transition meetings with families and the IU. The meetings will allow the district to meet families of incoming students, who have special needs.
 3. K Registration
 - Elementary principals are continuing to work with Dr. O'Donnell to set up kindergarten registration this year. For now, principals are asking families to submit a registration form by February 26, 2021.

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- The ultimate goal is to hold registration in-person. Because there is a limited amount of space and substitutes, the district is unable to schedule registration during the school day at this time. The district is looking at the possibility of holding registration during the evening or weekend.

- 4. K Readiness Workshops
 - In lieu of holding in-person kindergarten readiness workshops, Mrs. Yoders plans to send packets of materials to families in April, May, or June. The packets will include materials that the families would have received had the workshops taken place in-person.

- 5. K Camp
 - The district has set three tentative dates set for K Camp: June 21-24, July 12-15, and August 2-5.

- 6. Homelessness
 - Current Homeless Student Numbers
 - Mrs. Siruc said 70 students have been identified as homeless.

 - Homelessness Awareness Week
 - Teachers and staff donated over \$1,000 during the staff dress down day during Homelessness Awareness Week.

 - Assistance with Christmas gifts
 - The district continued to work with staff from Wal-Mart and patrons from The Bier Haus in securing Christmas gifts for homeless students and students in need. This year, gifts were purchased for 34 students.
 - Three LAC members helped to donate a Christmas tree and decorations for a family in need.

 - Other Donations
 - The Granville United Methodist Church also donated 25, \$20 Wal-Mart gift cards, which were given to students in need.
 - Staff at Wal-Mart donated various stocking stuffers, including: \$5 gift cards from McDonald's, Burger King, and Dairy Queen, as well as lotions and Chapstick.
 - Hartley's Potato Chips has also been donating ten cases of chips each week to assist the K-3 Weekend Powerpack programs.
 - Dr. O'Donnell wanted to note that a lot of work was put into delivering gifts, food, and other items by counselors, teachers, and

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SRO Ettinger, even when school was remote. He wanted to commend the staff for their hard work and dedication.

- Current Needs
 - The pantry is currently in need of toothpaste, toothbrushes, male-specific body wash and shampoo, pencil sharpeners, 3-ring binders, and spiral notebooks.
 - Ms. Fisher reminded attendees that there are a lot of local resources available. Mifflin Juniata Human Services received twice as much funding for food and rental assistance through COVID funding. She added that many families live day-to-day, so unless a need is currently present, many do not think about reaching out until it becomes a direct problem. Though there were good intentions behind the moratoriums that were implemented to delay evictions, they have compounded the problem, as many families have decided to make poor choices and not pay their rent.
 - Dr. O'Donnell said he would send a reminder to staff so that they know assistance is available externally.

- b. Title II, Improving Teacher Quality - \$313, 474
 - Title II continues to fund the salary and benefits of class size reduction teachers, as well as provide non-public schools with an equitable share for professional development activities.

- c. Title III, ESL - \$11, 287
 - Title III funds continue to provide professional development and instructional resources for EL teachers and students. Specifically, funds have been used to pay for training provided by Melanie Wolf-Greenburg, who is an educational consultant on ESL policy, procedure, instruction, and professional development. Funds were also used to send two, EL teachers to the National WIDA Conference. iPads and headphones were also purchased as supplemental resources for EL students

- d. Title IV - \$169, 455
 - Title IV funds continue to fund the salary and benefits of Nicole Frazier, a district-wide social worker and Alexis DiDomenico, a school counselor at SMES.

 - Funds are also used to pay for AP Testing fees for low-income students and a two-day smartboard training for new teachers.

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- e. Rural & Low - \$94, 526
 - Funds continue to fund services provided by Christina Combs, a Master's Level Therapist Behavioral Therapist from Laurel Life, as well as the salary and benefits of one class size reduction teacher.

- f. Ready to Learn (State) - \$968, 914
 - Funds continue to pay for the salary and benefits of the district's full-day kindergarten teachers.

- g. PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency School Safety and Security Grants (State)
 - 1. Grant ID 33852, COVID Response & Preparation - \$315, 606 (FER submitted)
 - The district used the funds to purchase:
 - 30 iPads to increase the amount of educational technology available for distance learning to ensure the continuity of education if remote learning become necessary at any point in the future due to the COVID 19 pandemic.
 - Newsela, an Instructional Content Platform that brings together engaging, accessible content with integrated assessments and insights to supercharge reading engagement and learning in every subject.
 - Educational technology related items and health and safety items (flash-drives, HDMI adapters, headsets, hotpots, monitors, batteries) to address the COVID 19 disaster emergency.
 - Cleaning and sanitizing products that meet the centers for disease control and prevention or department of health criteria.
 - Equipment, including personal protective equipment, thermometers, infrared cameras and other necessary items

 - The final expenditure report was submitted and the grant closed.

 - 2. Grant ID 31391, Mifflin County School District Trauma Team - \$450, 000
 - The district initially planned to use the funds to continue to pay the salary and benefits of a Systems Level Psychologist for the 21-22 and 22-23 school years. However, with Dr. Hall's departure over the summer, the district has had trouble filling the position. The district submitted and received an approved project modification request to change the title of the position to Mental Health Coordinator. Until the position is filled, Mrs. Marsh has been completing many of the required tasks.

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- Funds from this grant will also support the cost of contracted services for a Master's Level Behavioral Therapist and the salary and benefits of a Licensed Social Worker for the 21-22 and 22-23 school years.
 - An additional project modification request was submitted and approved to pay for the cost of SEL training for several school counselors and psychologists in the district.
3. Grant ID 31311, Mifflin County SRO - \$45, 000 (FER submitted)
- Funds from this grant were used to pay for services of an additional School Resource Officer.
 - The final expenditure report was submitted and the grant closed.
4. Grant ID 29390, Mifflin County School District Trauma Team - \$555, 550
- Funds were set aside to pay for the salary and benefits of a Systems Level Psychologist for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school year. However, with Dr. Hall's departure before the start of the 2020-2021 school year, a project modification request was submitted and approved to change the title of his position to Mental Health Coordinator. The district is still working to fill the position.
 - An additional project modification request was approved to pay for SEL training for several school counselors and psychologists.
 - Additional funds were used to pay for the contracted services of a Master's Level Behavioral Therapist and the salary and benefits of a Licensed Social Worker for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.
 - Remaining funds also helped support the costs of adding an additional School Resource Officer during the 2018-2019 school year.
5. Grant ID 35164 – Security Software Protection, \$141, 820
- Doug Cunningham, Director of Information and Technology, recommended that the district purchase Fortinac and FortiClient security software. The software will provide protection to all student and staff laptops, while on and off the district network.
 - Non-public schools in the district will also receive an equitable share of funds.

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- h. Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER I) - \$1, 835, 215
- Funds from this grant will be used to maintain:
 - two elementary teaching positions, a middle school reading teacher position, a high school English teacher position, a high school counselor position, and an elementary Special Education teacher position during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.
 - Funds will also be used to add an additional school counseling position at East Derry Elementary and an additional Alpha English teacher during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.
 - Additional funds will be used to:
 - Support supplemental afterschool and summer learning programs.
 - Purchase personal protective equipment/supplies to support student/staff return to school and in-person instruction.
 - Purchase cleaning and sanitizing supplies to support student/staff return to school and in-person instruction.
 - Purchase a data analysis system to analyze COVID-19's impact on student academic performance.
 - Support the salary and benefits of temporary technology staff to sanitize district laptops for COVID 19.
 - Support the cost of services provided by Mifflin County Regional Police and event staff to hold graduation.
 - Purchase software that will allow laptops to go between home and school.
 - Non-public schools in the district will also receive an equitable share of funds.
- i. Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II) – \$8, 678, 029
- ESSER II is a new grant the district is set to receive. Administration has made the following recommendations on how to utilize the funds:
 - Maintain the following positions for the 2020-2023 school year: two elementary teaching positions, a middle school Reading teacher position, a high school English teacher position, a high school counselor position, an elementary Special Education teacher position, an additional school counselor position at East Derry Elementary, and an Alpha English teaching position.

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- Provide supplemental afterschool and summer learning programs.
 - In the current plan, over \$1,000,000 has been budgeted to fund the after school and summer tutoring programs over the next several years.
 - Mr. Aurand, Assistant Principal at LIS, is currently working with administrators and teachers to create various scheduling plans, so that students can make use of the additional learning opportunities this summer.
 - Ms. Fisher asked if the supplemental learning programs will be virtual or in-person. Mr. Miller said the district has already implemented in-person after school tutoring and will continue to do so.
- Provide transportation for supplemental summer learning programs.
 - Ms. Fisher wanted to ensure transportation was built in for the summer learning programs. Mr. Miller said \$200,000 has been budgeted, but the district can revise that amount at any time.
- Purchase personal protective equipment/supplies to support the return of students and staff to school and in-person instruction.
- Purchase cleaning and sanitizing supplies to support the return of students and staff to school and in-person instruction
- Purchase necessary items to upgrade the district's network.
- Purchase iPads and laptops to support the district's One-to-One initiative next school year.
- Purchase additional iPads and laptops to refresh old models in the district.
- Purchase replacement desktops and laptops for teachers.
- Upgrade the district's power infrastructure for the One-to-One initiative.
- Purchase School Gate Guardian scanners.
- Fund the cost of overtime for staff in the technology department to implement the One-to-One initiative.
- Provide additional custodial positions to clean and sanitize the buildings.

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- Purchase an air handler control system.
 - Mr. Estep said that not only will the air handling system improve the health and physical climate within buildings, but by purchasing the system with grant funds, it will save the district's capital funds or reserves from needing to be used to maintain/upgrade the air systems.
 - Purchase storage sheds for PPE supplies.
 - Hire an Elementary Technology Facilitator.
 - Steph Moon currently serves as a Technology Intervention Coach for the district, but she mostly works at the secondary level. The district would like to hire a person, with similar responsibilities, to work primarily at the elementary level.
 - Hire a Career Pathways counselor/teacher at the high school.
 - Mr. Estep is retiring in September. One of the last major initiatives he wants to accomplish is to see the Career Pathways model get off the ground during the fall of 2021.
 - Mr. Estep would like to commend the leg work that has been completed by Mr. Crosson, his leadership team, and his school counselors, as well as Dr. O'Donnell. Mr. Estep thinks Career Pathways is going to be really good for kids.
 - Hire a contact tracer.
 - Provide additional days for nurses.
 - Ms. Sigler asked if there has been any consideration on adding an additional RN or LPN, as she does not feel that there are enough nurses in the district. Mr. Estep said her request can be added to the wish list.
 - Provide supplemental intervention resources to account for the loss of learning time.
- Administrators are still working to brainstorm additional ways the money can be spent. One additional idea they have is to replace the dish washer at Indian Valley Elementary, as the original is still in use and is no longer efficient.
 - Mr. Miller said that the funds can be spent through September 2023 and expenditures can be backdated to March 2020 when the shut-down began. He plans to finalize the application and submit it to the Division of Federal Programs within the next month.

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- j. Continuity of Education Equity Grant - \$24, 500 (FER submitted)
 - Funds from the Continuity of Education Equity Grant were used to purchase 35 additional laptops for distribution to ensure equitable access for learning for Students with Disabilities and purchase ten additional laptops for distribution to ensure equitable access for learning for Students with Disabilities.
 - The final expenditure report was submitted and the grant closed.
- k. Special Education COVID-19 Impact Mitigation Grant - \$52, 027
 - Teachers will receive training in various software programs and supplemental resources to support students in synchronous learning. Students with vision impairment need touchscreen computers and zoom software so that they are able to access instructional resources remotely.
 - The district plans to purchase these items in order to ensure students have access to FAPE:
 - Six Lenovo L15 touch screen laptops, one ZoomText Magnifier/Reader, fifty network license, five Zoomtext Magnifier/Reader standalone licenses, and a three-year Snap & Read license.
 - Supplemental resources to support CCS services.
- l. Curriculum & Professional Development
 - Dual enrollment
 - Dr. O'Donnell said the district is working very diligently to offer its first dual enrollment course at Mifflin County High School through Luzerne County Community College in the Fall of 2021. Details are still being worked out, as both entities need to decide which of LCCC's Spanish courses best fit with current district offerings. The course will most likely be considered an accelerated Spanish 2 course. There will be a \$25 registration fee and a \$130 fee to receive three college credits.
 - Ms. Fisher recommended that Dr. O'Donnell speak with Karin Knode to see what additional dual enrollment courses could be offered based on the needs in the community. Dr. O'Donnell said the courses the district will offer will most likely be required general education courses.

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- Ms. Sigler asked if the district can hire part-time teachers to serve as instructors for the dual enrollment courses. By hiring part-time teachers, she feels it would be an effective way to expand the amount of dual enrollment classes that are offered, as some retirees may meet the necessary requirements. Dr. O'Donnell said the teacher would be brought on as an adjunct professor.
 - Ms. Fisher asked if there are any scholarship opportunities available. Dr. O'Donnell has not worked out all the details with LCC yet, but he said LCC has scholarships available. The primary goal is to get the program started, then figure out how the district can maximize the number of students that can enroll. Dr. O'Donnell believes there are many generous community members, who may be willing to pay the fees for students in need. Ms. Fisher agreed and thinks this program will be a great way for students to get a taste of college, especially students who may not have thought college was for them.
 - Expanded course offerings
 - Dr. O'Donnell said teachers must have 15 credits in specific content areas to teach expanded courses. However, there are a limited number of teachers who meet the requirements in the district.
 - The district is looking to add more honors courses and other courses to expand student choice. This year, 11th Grade Honors English students took the course for half the year, then took an elective course pertaining to a specific genre of literature that interested them. Dr. O'Donnell hopes to expand this option to all 10th – 12th grade students.
 - Secondary MTSS
 - The district is working to focus on the individual needs of students instead of relying on team teaching at the secondary level.
 - Dr. O'Donnell added that almost all buildings in the district have been recognized for their PBIS initiatives. MCHS will begin their program toward the end of this year.
- m. Comprehensive Planning
- Mr. Miller said he will soon begin to set up Zoom meetings with stakeholders to discuss the Comprehensive Plan. The district is currently in Phase II of the plan and has until November 30, 2021 to submit its revisions.

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- n. Other District Programs
 - 1. Mr. Varner, Chief Operations Officer
 - Mr. Miller thanked Mr. Varner for his continued diligence with providing COVID updates.
 - 2. Mr. Crosson, Principal at Mifflin County High School
 - Prom & Graduation
 - Mr. Crosson is receiving continued questions about whether students will have prom and a traditional commencement ceremony this year. He and Mr. Varner are going to do everything they can to make those experiences as normal as possible for students. They are considering renting a very large tent to put on the track, so that students can do the promenade around the track.
 - Increased Mental Health Issues
 - The high school has seen a significant increase in student mental health issues. Six students were hospitalized last week due to mental health conditions. Because of this, Mr. Crosson would like to see if mental health referrals and services can continue after May.
 - Senior Night
 - Senior Night for wrestling is tonight. Ms. Maclay, the district Athletic Director, has done a great job with scheduling. She has been able to make accommodations for various athletic teams while juggling inclement weather and quarantines.
- IV. Agency Reports
 - a. Nikki Knepp Clear Concepts
 - Ms. Knepp said this has been a challenging school year. SAP teams are still meeting via Zoom, but the numbers have been less than in the past. Counselors are also having a difficult time seeing kids, as schools have been closed due to COVID-19 and inclement weather. Counselors are trying their best to be creative so that they can see students. They have offered teleservices and services via Zoom, but it has been difficult to be consistent. Counselors have had more success meeting with secondary students, as they are more independent and can set up their own appointments. Meeting with elementary students via Zoom is a lot more challenging, as it is difficult to hold their attention.

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- Funding is available for services to continue through the summer. Ms. Knepp said it may also be possible to make services available during extended tutoring times that the district is offering.
 - Ms. Knepp said she believes folks often forget about the amount of grief students are also experiencing right now. They are also experiencing isolation, in addition to other mental health issues. Erica Hargenrader agreed and said it is a challenge to keep children away from the negative consequences and pressure of social media and technology, especially as kids are required to complete school work remotely. Ms. Hargenrader said her son's teacher, Mr. Fink has done a great job at checking in with his students through morning meetings. He will ask questions like, "Who had something cool to eat last night" to make sure his students ate or he will say, "I see you really like that sweatshirt" if he notices that a student wore it multiple days in a row.
- b. Aleta Kammerer, Communities that Care
- The CTC will hold a Strategic Planning Meeting on February 26 via Zoom at 11:30 am.
 - In November, the CTC held a data day to review the PAYS data from 2019. During the meeting, attendees prioritized risk and protective factors. The risk factors were identified as: depressive symptoms, low commitment to school, and parental attitudes favorable for ATOD use and antisocial behaviors. The protective factors were identified as: opportunities for social involvement for family, family attachment, and community rewards for pro-social behaviors.
 - The Positive Vibes group will be holding a button design contest. The deadline for submission is February 9.
- c. Shelby Liebegott, TIU
- The Life Skills Program for 7th grades students will start February 22.
 - Project Yes, which is a program for at-risk youth in 6th and 7th grades, has continued throughout school closures. The case manager spent entire school days with students to make sure they were completing their school work.
 - Lessons for Second Step, which is a social/emotional learning program, are being recorded and sent to teachers. Teachers are then posting the videos to their online classrooms, which is great because parents can now view the lessons.

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- d. Cristy Yoders, Success by 6
- Mrs. Yoders wanted folks to remember that even our youngest are experiencing challenges due to COVID-19. She provided an example of how her great nephew, unlike his siblings, has never been to a restaurant.
- e. Allison Fisher, Mifflin Juniata Human Services
- Ms. Fisher provided the direct lines for rental and utility assistance, 717-447-5121 and the tax prep program, 717-320-4872.
 - Ms. Fisher also wanted to reassure everyone that local resources are available and encouraged those in need to reach out to Mifflin Juniata Human Services.
- f. Rose Schulz, Parent
- Mrs. Schulz asked if the district is currently offering supplemental after school tutoring. Mr. Miller confirmed that the district is already offering afterschool tutoring programs, and hopes to add a summer tutoring program with the use of ESSER funds.
 - Mrs. Schulz also asked how the district plans to communicate to families and the community that these services are available. She expressed concern that Gifted and Fast Track students are regressing and would like to ensure that they are also offered tutoring services. Mr. Miller said students who are struggling will be a priority, but he will communicate Ms. Schulz's concern to Mr. Aurand to see if these particular students can also receive help. Mr. Miller will also talk with Mr. Aurand about how the district can consistently send out communications to families.
 - Mrs. Schulz also agreed with Ms. Hargenrader's previous statement that Mr. Fink is a super star teacher.
- g. Ms. Hargenrader, Parent
- Ms. Hargenrader said teachers are trying to balance the role of being teachers and social workers. As a county probation officer, she has to work with the parents of several of her son's classmates. She said there are currently 20 pending domestic dockets due for court.
- h. Barb Frankhouser, Community Member
- Mrs. Frankhouser thanked everyone for sharing and for including her in the discussion.

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V. Future Meeting Dates

- The last meeting for this school year will be held on May 6, 2021 via Zoom at 10:00 am.

VI. Adjournment

- Mr. Miller thanked everyone for sharing their ideas and providing feedback, all of which help the district to continue to move forward.
- Mrs. Frankhouser made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Schulz.