

MIFFLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

201 Eighth Street - Highland Park
Lewistown, Pennsylvania 17044

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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, September 17, 2020
9:00 am – 11:00 am
Zoom**

In Attendance: Jim Estep, Allison Fisher, Barbara Frankhouser, Erica Hargenrader, Aleta Kammerer, Nikki Knepp, Karin Knode, Shelby Liebegott, Frank Miller, Kevin O'Donnell, Rose Schulz, Mary Lou Sigler, Michelle Siruc, and Cristy Yoders

Minutes

- I. Attendance Sign in and Welcome
 - Mr. Miller welcomed everyone to the Zoom. He hopes that the group will be able to meet person, again, soon.
- II. Approval of Minutes from February 6, 2020
 - Ms. Sigler made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 6, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Frankhouser.
- III. Federal Programs Review
 - a. Title I
 1. Allocation
 - Mr. Miller explained that Title I is the largest federal allocation the district receives. The allocation for this year is \$2,353,339, which is consistent with past years.
 2. Expenditures
 - Title I funds pay for the salaries and benefits of 22 teachers. Title I Funds also pay for half of Mr. Miller's salary and benefits as the Federal Programs Coordinator, half of Dr. O'Donnell's salary and benefits as the Chief Academic Officer, and half of Mrs. Siruc's salary and benefits, as the Federal Programs Secretary.
 3. Schoolwide Plans –EDES/IVES/LES/SMES
 - The district continues to revise and update its Schoolwide Plans for the K-3 buildings each year.
 - The schoolwide plans focus on a variety of "I Can" statements.
 4. Develop a Multi-Tier System of Support Model

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- Title I funds are also used to maintain a multi-tiered system of support. Universal screenings for all K-5 students are emphasized in reading literacy. Teachers assess the strengths and weaknesses of their students based on academic performance, deliver early interventions that are based on observable, reliable, and measurable information, and monitor/chart students' response to interventions.
5. Continue to invest in researched based reading and math interventions and university screeners for all K-3 teachers and students
 - The district continues to use Title I funds to implement the Benchmark Assessment System universal screener for reading and the Spring Math universal screener and intervention tool for math.
 6. Continue to invest in School-wide Positive Behavioral Support (PBIS)
 - The district continues to use Title I funds to support a Positive Behavioral Support system for its students. Any time a staff member witnesses a student doing something positive, he/she receives tickets, which can be turned in for various rewards and prizes.
 7. Chief Academic Officer
 - With Mrs. Mitchell's departure at the close of the 2019-2020 school year, the district expanded and renamed her position. Dr. Kevin O'Donnell is the new Chief Academic Officer for MCSD.
 - Dr. O'Donnell will utilize school data to assist the eligible Title I schoolwide buildings in developing a system for continual school improvement by facilitating and planning the development of School Wide plans that ensure the use of aligned curriculum, assessments, and ongoing professional development.
 8. Camp on Your way to Kindergarten
 - Due to COVID-19, Camp on Your Way to Kindergarten was cancelled this summer. The district hopes to bring the camp back next year.
 9. Curriculum
 - The district continues to work to align its curriculum to PA Common Core standards.

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- It also utilizes various tiered and leveled literacy interventions and resources including: Wilson, 95% Group, Early Reading Intervention, Rave-O, Foundations, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, West Virginia Phonics, and Spring Math.

10. Parental Engagement

- 1% Set aside
 - Any time a district receives over \$500,000 in Title I funds, 1% must be set aside for Parental Engagement activities. MCSD currently sets aside over \$23,000, which is shared between K-3 buildings.
- Parent Engagement Policies and Compact
 - This year's Title I District Parent Engagement Policy was shared with attendees. Ms. Sigler made a motion to approve the policy, which was seconded by Mrs. Knode.
- Parent Engagement Coordinators for each Title I building
 - Each K-3 building has a Parent Engagement Coordinator. The Parent Engagement Coordinators will create a building level needs assessment and will revise and share a building level compact and policy with parents. The information will be posted on the Federal Programs portion of the MCSD website and will be sent home to families through Class Dojo.
- LEA Title I Survey
 - The district is required to send home a Title I survey each year. Because school was not in session in May, the district was unable to send its traditional survey. Instead, it will use the MCSD Return to School Planning Survey that Dr. O'Donnell sent out in June.
 - The district received 2,270 responses from the survey. Parents were able to submit their responses electronically or via paper/pencil. Translated copies of the survey were also available
 - Administration is still working to implement changes to the school day based on the opinions of parents. One item Dr. O'Donnell is working to implement are Morning Meetings,

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which will focus on the social and emotional well-being of students.

- Ms. Sigler expressed an issue with the survey. She believes the results are inaccurate or skewed, as families with multiple children were able to submit multiple responses. If future surveys are sent out, she would like to see a breakdown of responses by grade level. Dr. O'Donnell said he completed a demographic breakdown of the survey data and feels it was an accurate grade level sampling.
- Dr. O'Donnell added that student enrollment is still fluctuating, as families are going back and forth between in-person and cyber options. Many parents of incoming kindergarteners also decided to delay enrolling their children for another year. Based on the survey results, 10-13% of families did not want to attend school in-person. Mr. Estep agreed that the 10-13% figure from the survey is correct. There are approximately 624 students enrolled in Alpha or MCO, which is about 13% of 4,800 students in the district.
- Ms. Fisher reminded attendees that the survey results are only representative of approximately 5% of the population of Mifflin County.

11. Right to Know – Appropriate State Certification

- If a teacher does not have the appropriate state certification and teaches a student for four consecutive weeks or more, the family must be notified.

12. Student Homelessness

- Mrs. Siruc is working with the school counselors to check on the families who were homeless at the end of last school year to see if they are still actively experiencing homelessness. As of today, 20 children have been identified as homeless.
- A free webinar is being offered from 2 – 3:30 pm today, called “Implementing the McKinney Vento Act in the COVID-19 Era”. If anyone is interested in attending, please let Mrs. Siruc know, so that she can forward the registration information.
- The annual state homeless conference will be offered via Zoom this year on October 13-15. There is no cost to attend. If anyone is

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interested in attending, please let Mrs. Siruc know, so that she can send you the registration information.

- Ms. Fisher said Mifflin Juniata Human Services received six times the amount of funds it usually does. The funds will be used to assist families facing eviction and must be used by December. Ms. Fisher asked Mrs. Siruc to pass the information along to the counselors, school nurses, and principals, so that they can refer families to the program.
- Mrs. Siruc hopes to offer a similar outreach event as last year for Homelessness Awareness Week. She plans to work with the teachers' union to arrange a dress down day to collect funds for the student pantry and ask for food donations for the K-3 Weekend Powerpack programs.

b. Title II-Improving Teacher Quality

1. Allocation

- The district received \$313,474 for the 2020-2021 school year.

2. Expenditures

- The funds are used to fund 2.10 class size reduction teachers within the primary grades.
- Non-public schools within the district also receive an equitable share.

c. Title III

1. Allocation

- The district received \$11,287 for the 2020-2021 school year.

2. Expenditures

- The funds will be used for language instruction for English Learners. The district will continue to use the funds to provide professional development through Melanie Wolf-Greenburg, who is an educational consultant. Funds will also be used to send two EL teachers to the national WIDA conference and purchase resources for EL students.

d. Title IV

1. Allocation

- The district received \$169,455 for the 2020-2021 school year.

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2. Expenditures

- Funds are used to provide student support and academic enrichment. Under the, “Well-Rounded Educational Opportunity” expenditure category, funds are used to pay for the AP testing fees for low income students and support the salary and benefits of the counselor at Strodes Mills Elementary School.
- The salary and benefits of one of the district’s social workers is supported under the, “Safe and Healthy Students” expenditure category.
- New teachers are required to attend a two-day Smartboard training, which is paid for under the, “Effective Use of Technology” expenditure category.
- Non-public schools also receive an equitable share of funds.

e. Rural & Low Income

1. Allocation

- The district received \$94,526 in Rural and Low-Income grant funds. Initially, the district received notification that it would not receive any funds from the grant. However, once the district questioned the notification, it was discovered that funds would be received.

2. Expenditures

- Funds from the grant are used to pay for the services of a full-time Masters Level Behavioral Therapist, as well as the salaries and benefits of class size reduction teachers.

f. Ready to Learn

1. Allocation

- The district received \$968,914 from the Ready to Learn grant, which is a state grant.

2. Expenditures

- The funds are used to pay for the salaries and benefits of ten, full-day Kindergarten teachers.

g. PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency School Safety and Security Grant (State)

1. Grant ID 33852

a. Allocation

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- The district received several PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency School Safety grants. Through Grant ID 33852 the district was awarded \$315,606 to be used for COVID response and preparation.

b. Expenditures

- The district used the funds to purchase 30 iPads to increase the amount of educational technology available for distance learning. The iPads will help ensure the continuity of education if remote learning becomes necessary at any point in the future due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The district also purchased a subscription to Newsela, which is 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 were also purchased to address the COVID-19 disaster emergency (flash-drives, HDMI adapters, headsets, hotpots, monitors, batteries).
- Cleaning and sanitizing products that meet the centers for disease control and prevention or department of health criteria were purchased, as well (personal protective equipment, thermometers, infrared cameras and other necessary items).

2. Grant ID 31391 – Mifflin County School District Trauma Team

a. Allocation

- The district was awarded \$450,000.

b. Expenditures

- The funds allowed the district to continue funding three positions that were created last year, for an additional two years (a Systems Level Psychologist, a Master's Level Behavioral Therapist, and a Licensed Social Worker).

3. Grant ID 31311 – Mifflin County SRO

a. Allocation

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- There is a remaining balance of \$45,000 from the initial \$450,000 that was awarded.
- b. Expenditures
- Funds will be used to continuing funding Officer Ettinger for the 20-21 school year. Mrs. Sigler asked if there are any additional funds available to continue Officer Ettinger's position after 20-21. Mr. Miller said the district is waiting to hear if more PCCD grants are available.
4. Grant ID 29390 – Mifflin County School District Trauma Team
- a. Allocation
- The district received \$550,000 last school year.
- b. Expenditures
- The funds were used to hire a Systems Level Psychologist, a Master's Level Behavioral Therapist, and a Licensed Social Worker for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years.
 - The funds were also used to hire a School Resource Officer for the 2018-2019 school year.
- h. Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER or CARES)
1. Allocation
- The district received \$1,835,215 in funds.
2. Expenditures
- Funds were used to maintain two elementary teaching positions, one middle school reading teaching position, one high school English teaching position, a high school counselor position and a middle school Special Education teaching position for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.
 - Funds were also used to create an additional school counselor position at East Derry Elementary and a new English teaching position within the Alpha program for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.
 - Remaining funds will be used for supplemental afterschool and summer learning programs, the purchase of personal protective equipment and cleaning/sanitizing supplies to support the return to school for students and staff, the purchase of a data analysis system

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to analyze the impact of COVID-19 on student academic performance, the salary and benefits of temporary technology staff to sanitize district laptops, and Mifflin County Regional Police and event staff services for a COVID-19 graduation.

- i. Continuity of Education Equity Grant
 1. Allocation
 - The district received \$24,500 in funds.
 2. Expenditures
 - The district will purchase 35 additional laptops and ten additional iPads to ensure equitable access for learning for students with disabilities.

- j. Special Education COVID-19 Impact Mitigation Grant
 1. Allocation
 - The district received \$52,027 in funds.
 2. Expenditures
 - Mrs. Marsh, Director of Student Services, will decide how the funds will be spent.
 - Funds can be used to provide enhanced synchronous instruction via advancements to infrastructure and/or resources to bolster remote services and supports for students with complex needs and/or services and supports to students with disabilities that evidenced a loss in skills and/or behavior and/or lack of progress due to the mandatory school closures following a skill recoupment period and delivered beyond the school day

- k. Comprehensive Planning
 1. Phase 2
 - The district is currently in Phase 2 of Comprehensive Planning. It must submit its revisions by March 20, 2021.
 2. Summary of Current Plan
 - The Comprehensive Plan and Summary of District Level Professional Education Plan can be reviewed at www.mcsdk12.org.

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3. Summary of Current Goals

- There are four goals currently listed in MCSD's plan –
 - Goal #1: Establish a district system that fully ensures consistent implementation of standards aligned curricula across all schools for all students.
 - Goal #2: Establish a district system that fully ensures the consistent implementation of effective instructional practices across all classrooms in each school.
 - Goal #3: Establish a district system that fully ensures staff members in every school use standard aligned assessments to monitor student achievement and adjust instructional practices.
 - Goal #4: Establish a district system that fully ensures professional development is focused, comprehensive and implemented with fidelity.

l. Other District Programs

- There was nothing to add at this time.

m. Agency Reports

1. Cristy Yoders, Success by 6

- Two early childhood programs stayed open with waivers during the COVID-19 shutdown. Most centers are now open and running at 50% capacity. Cases of COVID-19 have been low at the centers. If the district goes virtual and families need child care, please reach out to Mrs. Yoders for assistance.
- Ms. Fisher said more local employers are finding ways to keep their employees at work. If the school district goes completely virtual, she suspects that families will become more stressed, as they try to figure out child care.

2. Mary Lou Sigler, School Board Member

- Ms. Sigler asked Mr. Estep to explain the current situation in regards to substitutes. Mr. Estep said the district is in a horrific situation with subs, as there is already a teacher shortage nationwide. He does not anticipate the district being open all year because of rising cases. If more teachers are out and less subs are available, the district will have to close, as it will not be able to move more students into classrooms due to distancing guidelines. He is also concerned about the availability of bus drivers, as 95%

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of them are over the age of 65. If a handful of drivers get sick, there will not be enough people to provide transportation. He also estimates seeing extensive furloughs. Ms. Sigler recommend that the district utilize a hybrid model before going completely virtual.

3. Aleta Kammerer, Communities that Care

- Mrs. Kammerer has been sending out a, "Chose Kindness" newsletter. If any attendee is not currently receiving the newsletter and would like to, please let her know.
- The annual meeting for CTC will be held on September 25th at 11:30 am via Zoom. The registration link was included in the most recent newsletter, but Mrs. Kammerer can send the link separately to anyone who is interested in joining.
- Mrs. Kammerer received the PAYS results from Fall 2019 and is working to analyze the data in each section. 1,193 surveys were given out to 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students at MCSD and BMS. There was a 75% participation rate amongst 6th, 8th, and 10th grade students, but only a 54% participation rate amongst 12th grade students.
- The CTC recently offered a virtual suicide prevention training, in which 60 people participated.
- Students in the Positive Vibes group continue to be active. They created welcome back signs and will be doing a smiley sticker initiative.

4. Shelby Liebegott, Project Yes, Second Step, & Life Skills

- The Second Step program, which is a social/emotional learning program for students in grades K-5, is back up and running as of Tuesday. The developers of the program prepared instructors to be able to deliver the curriculum all year round, regardless of format.
- Project Yes is a program for at-risk students in 6th and 7th grades. Curt Eversole, the case manager for the program, is in the process of re-enrolling ten students. He is prepared to work with students in their homes or move virtually.
- The Life Skills program is typically offered to 7th grade students and is 15 weeks long. However, Mrs. Liebegott is holding off on implementing the program right now.

5. Nikki Knepp, Clear Concepts

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- The Student Assistance Program started this week and is beginning to receive referrals. Mrs. Knepp hopes the program can continue in school, but realizes that counseling may have to move to a virtual format.

6. Barb Frankhouser, Community Member

- Mrs. Frankhouser feels that the district has been very fortunate in receiving the amount of funding it has. She wishes Mr. Estep and the Board the very best as they have a full plate.
- Mr. Estep agreed that the district is very fortunate and credits Mr. Miller, Mrs. Marsh, and Mrs. Mitchell in developing the various grant applications.

n. Adjournment

- The next meeting is Thursday, November 5. Because it will most likely be held via Zoom, the group decided to stick with the 9:00 am time slot.
- The remaining meetings for the year will be held on February 4th and May 6th.
- Mrs. Frankhouser made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mrs. Kammerer.