



# STRATEGIC PLAN

## Update October 2021

For Muncie Community Schools (MCS)

*MCS Vision:* Placing Learners First

*MCS Mission Statement:* The mission of Muncie Community Schools is to provide a quality education environment where every child is known, safe, inspired, challenged, and empowered.



## A Letter from Dr. K.

It is with great pleasure that I present this first biennial report describing our efforts in implementing our Muncie Community Schools (“MCS”) Innovation and Financial Viability Plan. As you may recall, we simultaneously submitted the MCS Strategic Plan, 2020-2025, outlining our implementation strategies. The report covers the past two years coinciding with my tenure at MCS: School Year 2019-20 and School Year 2020-21/Summer.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, I am extremely pleased with the progress we have made toward improving the learning and the lives of our students. Our Strategic Plan confirms our commitment to the MCS Innovation and Financial Viability Plan; it also keeps us focused on addressing issues with data and evidence-based solutions in a logical and manageable sequence. Here are a few highlights:

- Acted on more than one-half of the 200 Action Steps in our Strategic Plan.
- Provided MCS staff with more than 30 professional development sessions.
- Opened high quality preschool classrooms in all elementary schools.
- Provided staff pay raises for the first time in more than a decade.
- Hired and trained master and mentor teachers in all of our schools.
- Adopted and implemented a new Teacher Evaluation Rubric.
- Introduced a new elementary literacy program.
- Expanded our STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program.
- Introduced new classes, courses, college credit, and career opportunities in the middle and high schools and at the Muncie Area Career Center (MACC).
- Added a no-cost after-school program at Grissom Elementary in partnership with the YMCA.
- Partnered with Meridian Health Services to open a physical and mental health clinic at Southside Middle School for families, students, staff, and community.

In addition to these accomplishments, we developed a comprehensive, safe, and effective reopening plan in response to COVID-19. In March 2020, when schools were ordered to close, we maneuvered quickly, creating learning packets for elementary students and establishing e-Learning for secondary students. We distributed breakfast and lunch through pick-up spots around the city. During the late spring and summer, we worked diligently to prepare for the new school year reopening, under COVID-19, with options of a remote student learning opportunity or a CDC-approved classroom. In August 2020, we were ready and able to provide both in-school and online learning options for our learners. This Plan, modified to fit changed conditions, also proved to be invaluable in reopening our schools in August, 2021.

Thanks to our dedicated staff, faculty, and administrators, MCS has accomplished so much in only two years. Our team’s willingness and ability to adapt to daily changes due to new knowledge about the virus and government-issued requirements has truly been outstanding.

Finally, I want to thank Ball State University, local foundations, community non-profits, volunteers, our students and their families, and a myriad of others who partner with us, believe in our future, and support MCS and our learners. We are better together!

Sincerely,

Dr. Lee Ann Kwiatkowski  
Muncie Community Schools, Director of Public Education and CEO

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<sup>1</sup> Though the Innovation and Financial Viability Plan was not submitted pursuant to statute until June 30, 2020, MCS initiated certain strategies in advance of its submission.



## A Note to the Reader

### Our Intention

The purpose of this report is to provide our students, staff, families, neighborhoods, and the education community at large with a description of the work being done, challenges encountered, lessons learned, adaptations made, and goals accomplished. As many of you know, we submitted our Innovation Plan along with the MCS Strategic Plan to the State of Indiana in June of 2020. These guiding documents were created and submitted in accordance with the State's statutory directive to MCS in forming its partnership with Ball State University. We are creating this report to illustrate our fidelity to the Innovation and Strategic Plans. Finally, pursuant to I.C. 20-23-18-10, MCS is obligated to provide a report to the State regarding its progress in implementing the Innovation Plan, and to make recommendations concerning innovative methods of instruction being used in our public schools.

### Our Presentation

Our presentation follows the outline of the MCS Innovation and Strategic Plan with sections for each of the five pillars:

- Pillar I: High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten Education
- Pillar II: Recruitment, Development, and Retention of Educational Leaders
- Pillar III: Student-Centered Teaching and Active Learning
- Pillar IV: Social and Emotional Learning
- Pillar V: Family and Community Engagement

Within each pillar, the strategies and key action steps that we addressed are listed. Please recognize that implementation of the plan is being sequenced according to pre-identified priorities and unforeseen critical issues that arise. Thus, not all strategies and actions steps are included - only those that have been our focus for the past two years. Each key action step includes:

- **Rationale:** an explanation of why the strategy or action is a priority
- **Progress Toward Goal:** stated as

Not yet started	Early Stages	On Track	Off-Track	Completed	No Further Action Needed
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- **Evidence of Progress:** a description of the completed activities
- **Next Steps:** the actions planned to advance the strategy in the future

Most of the strategies are multi-year tasks with numerous key action steps. The strategies and action steps that MCS has begun are presented in this report.

**Thank You** to the administrators and principals who provided the data to ensure this document is accurate and timely.



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## Pillar I: High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten Education

**GOAL 1:** Our 3- and 4-year-old learners will be kindergarten-ready through access to high-quality pre-kindergarten programs in all our elementary schools.

**Strategy 1.1** Increase the number of PreK classrooms.

**Rationale:** Critical brain development occurs between birth and age five. This period of development, if compromised for any reason, such as trauma, poverty, or limited stimulation, is extraordinarily difficult to remedy and has lifelong negative impacts on the child. To counter these issues, MCS will offer an increased number of high-quality, culturally-appropriate PreK classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** School year 2018-19 served as the goal baseline with three out of six elementary schools housing PreK classrooms: East Washington, Grissom, and South View. In January 2020, Longfellow opened its first PreK classroom. This accomplishment succeeded through a partnership with Huffer Memorial Children’s Center and with financial assistance from the George and Frances Ball Foundation.

During the Spring/Summer 2020, MCS planned and prepared to open two new PreK classrooms at North View and West View elementary schools and identified available classroom space, purchased equipment and materials, interviewed and hired staff, communicated with school-area families and the community, and determined learners’ needs. In August 2020, the two PreK classrooms opened, resulting in every elementary school housing a PreK classroom (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. PreK Classrooms in MCS Elementary Schools

Elementary School	2018-19 Baseline	2019-20 End of Year	2020-21 1st Semester
1. East Washington Academy	✓	✓	✓
2. Grissom	✓	✓	✓
3. Longfellow	---	✓	✓
4. South View	✓	✓	✓
5. North View	---	---	✓
6. West View	---	---	✓



With a PreK classroom now in each elementary school, the initial MCS goal has been met with enrollment increasing steadily from 50 students in the baseline year to 111 this past semester (Table 1.2). The next step is to increase learner enrollment to reach the allowable capacity in each classroom. Capacity differs in each school, depending on the size of the room and the number of adults available to serve as teachers and aides.

Table1.2. PreK Classroom Enrollment by Year

Elementary School	2018-19 Baseline	2019-20 End of Year	2020-21 1st Sem.	2020-21 2nd Sem.
1. East Washington Academy	20	19	20	20
2. Grissom	17	20	19	20
3. Longfellow	--	10	10	12
4. South View	13	18	10	20
5. North View	---	---	17	19
6. West View	---	---	20	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>111</b>

For young children with special needs, MCS leads the preschool special education cooperative for Delaware County. The program offers a continuum of special education services for children 3-5 years of age with virtual and walk-in services and community-setting placements. MCS provides a language group and a developmental preschool classroom to provide specific services and to improve socialization with other young children. Currently, 85 students participate in these various programs.

**Next Steps:** With one PreK classroom established in each elementary school, MCS will focus on increasing enrollment to full capacity. Enrollment was hampered this year by family reluctance to send their young children to a school setting during the pandemic. MCS will increase the number and types of communications sent in Summer and Spring 2021 to school-area families and the community, with a focus on the importance of early childhood education. We will hold registration fairs to assist families with the enrollment process. Reducing staff turnover is an additional goal as this is a continual struggle that most early childhood providers face. We will more actively recruit PreK classroom assistants and teachers and explore adding an additional PreK classroom at Southview, Grissom, and Longfellow Elementary Schools.

**Strategy 1.2 Increase the number of eligible learners enrolled through *On My Way PreK* eligibility.**

**Rationale:** MCS bears the costs for the five PreK classrooms as this is not part of the state appropriation. We share costs with Huffer for the Longfellow program. However, the State of Indiana provides On My Way (OMW) Pre-K grants to 4-year-olds from low-income families who meet eligibility criteria. These funds allow the families to access a high-quality pre-K program (Level 3 or 4 on the Paths to Quality) the year before the children begin kindergarten. The MCS goal is to increase the number of low-income families that apply for and receive OMW grants. These funds help offset MCS’s PreK costs, leading to program sustainability and possible increased family enrollment. School districts receiving OMW grants



also tend to secure a larger allocation of the State’s available OMW seats for the county thereby benefitting the broader community of Delaware County.

- ◆ **Action Step 1.2b.** Conduct regular meetings with the Delaware County OMW PreK regional manager about increasing learning enrollment.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** MCS meets regularly with the Delaware County OMW regional manager to brainstorm ways to increase student enrollment in MCS preschools. We are in the “Early Stages” of other action steps in this strategy. We are increasing awareness of the OMW Pre-K grants within the school community by informing teachers and administrators of their existence. In the past three years, the number of families receiving grants has steadily increased from 3 to 14 for this last semester (Table 1.3). The goal is to increase the number of families utilizing OMW grants to reduce the cost paid by MCS.

Table 1.3. Children Receiving OMW Grants

Elementary Schools	2018-19 Baseline	2019-20 End of Year	2020-21 1st Sem.	2020-21 2nd Sem.
1. East Washington Academy	---	0	0	2
2. Grissom	3	6	8	8
3. Longfellow	---	0	0	0
4. South View	---	2	3	4
5. North View	---	---	0	0
6. West View	---	---	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>

**Next Steps:** Future action steps include: (a) increasing communications to families and the community about the grants, (b) creating an application assistance program, as the application has multiple steps and requires several documents — a major barrier for some families, and (c) will continue to work with the county OMY manager.

**Strategy 1.3 Improve the quality of our PreK programs, achieving higher level ratings through Indiana’s Paths to QUALITY (PTQ), including diversity and cultural understanding.**

**Rationale:** Early childhood programs vary widely in their quality and expectations of young learners, and in the program’s ability to nurture the social and emotional needs of the children. To help families find preschool programs matching the quality they are seeking, the State of Indiana developed the Paths to QUALITY™ rating system. The system consists of four levels of quality from 1-4 with “4” being the highest. Over time, MCS will ensure that its preschools are of the highest quality—Level 4:

- Level 1: The health and safety needs of children are met.
- Level 2: The environment supports children’s learning.
- Level 3: Planned curriculum guides child development and school readiness.
- Level 4: National accreditation (the highest indicator of quality) is achieved.



**Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** Achieving the next level of quality in the preschool programs requires multiple years. Therefore, each MCS program is on a different timeline to reach the highest level. The three PreK programs that were Level 3–EWA, Grissom and South View–began the process of Level 4 accreditation in 2020-21, which involves accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and requires two or more years to achieve. Programs that were Level 1 or 2–East Washington, North View and West View–obtained a Level 3 rating this year. Additionally, the Longfellow PreK program, directed by Huffer, also reached a Level 3 rating (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4. PreK Programs Paths to QUALITY™ (PTQ) Ratings and Desired Level to Achieve

PreK Programs	2018-19 Baseline	2019-20 Year End	2020-21 1st Sem.	2020-21 2nd Sem.	Desired Level to Achieve
1. East Washington Academy	---	2	3	3	Level 4
2. Grissom	3	3	3	3	Level 4
3. Longfellow	---	3	3	3	Level 4
4. South View	3	3	3	3	Level 4
5. North View (new program)	---	---	1	3	Level 4
6. West View (new program)	---	---	1	3	Level 4

**Next Steps:** . All programs will continue to strive to reach PTQ Level 4 rating.

**Strategy 1.4 Develop and implement with fidelity a Pre-K core literacy (English language arts) curriculum with best practices instruction, and valid and reliable assessments.**

**Rationale:** Literacy is critical to success in life, and literacy development begins early in a child’s life. Young children listen to others read aloud to them, observe others reading and writing, and enjoy rhymes and songs. For children whose homes provide only limited preliteracy experiences, MCS committed in the Strategic Plan, to provide early literacy enrichment for children ages 3-4 through the PreK classrooms

**Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** The strategies and action steps for PreK literacy are identical to those for K-5 but occur one year later to allow for a focus on one age group at a time. In line with the K-5 literacy program, the district adopted the Fountas and Pinnell (FP) preschool literacy program “Literacy Beginnings” in Fall 2019. The program provides 25-minute lessons with age-appropriate stories and early literacy activities. To learn about the program, the six preschool teachers participated in eight hours of FP-provided training in Summer 2020 (Table 1.5). In January 2021, preschool teachers and assistants met with a mentor teacher and the preschool teacher of record to receive additional literacy implementation training.





Table 1.5. PreK Literacy Program Adoption and Implementation

Group	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
K-5	District adopts FP literacy program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- FPC teacher training</li><li>- Initial implementation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Full FPC implementation</li><li>- Formative assessments begun</li></ul>
PreK	---	District adopts FP literacy program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- FPC teacher training</li><li>- Initial implementation</li><li>- Early childhood best literacy practices</li></ul>

**Next Steps:** For SY 2021-22, MCS will adopt and implement a full-day curriculum that is evidence-based, state approved, and developmentally appropriate for young children.



## Pillar II: Recruitment, Development and Retention of Educational Leaders

**GOAL 2:** Our Leaders at the district, school, and classroom levels are of the highest caliber and continuously excel through professional learning opportunities, coaching, and mentoring.

### A. Development of Teachers and Leaders

**Rationale:** As with other professional occupations, educators—both teachers and administrators—are lifelong learners, continuing to hone their craft, stay aware of new developments, and adhere to the best instructional practices, including culturally appropriate practices. Pillar II, with its focus on MCS staff, consists of two components: (a) the professional development of high-quality teachers and leaders and (b) the hiring and retention of highly competent teachers and leaders.

#### Strategy 2.1 Develop teachers that know and use best educational practices.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.1 a1:** Develop school Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs), consisting of principals, assistant principals, and Master and Mentor Teachers; train the ILTs to use the MCS Teacher Evaluation Tool with consistency and fidelity.

##### Progress Toward Goal: On Track

**Evidence of Progress:** In 2020-21, each school principal established an ILT, consisting of the principal, assistant principal, the Master Teacher, the Mentor Teacher, and a Ball State professional school development liaison. The role of the ILTs is to improve teaching and learning through increased collaboration and distributive leadership. The teams assess the progress of teachers and students and provide support. During the past year, ILT members received training from NIET with accompanying follow-up, as needed, individually and in teams, in person, virtually, and on the phone. Examples of topics addressed include classroom evaluation and observation; analyzing teacher and student data to determine progress; and planning and providing differentiated instructional support to teachers.

**Next Steps:** NIET will continue to support the maturation of the ILTs through coaching and mentoring.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.1 a2:** Identify and develop Master and Mentor Teachers to lead professional learning sessions and conduct teaching demonstrations and coaching.

##### Progress Toward Goal: On Track

**Evidence of Progress:** The MCS Strategic Plan indicated two initiatives critical to increased teacher use of best educational practices: (a) Mentor Teachers and Master Teachers and (b) Instructional Leadership Teams. The development of Mentor and Master Teachers in each school includes gaining expertise in



best instructional practices and developing the skills needed to observe and assist classroom teachers through modeling lessons, coaching, and mentoring. To this end, our identified Master and Mentor Teachers received training from the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) in 2019-20 and 2020-21. The training provided them the knowledge and skills for serving in their roles of (a) conducting professional learning and (b) mentoring and coaching classroom teachers (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Master and Mentor Teachers: Training and Support Received

Topics/Skills	Training Provided by NIET	
	2019-20	2020-21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best instructional practices (MCS Teaching Standards Rubric).</li> </ul>	18 hours (3 days)	24 hours (4 days)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to create and conduct professional learning experiences.</li> <li>• How to support teachers through modeling and coaching.</li> </ul>	144 hours (24 days) Various school sites	147 hours (29 days) Various school Sites

**Next Steps:** NIET will continue coaching and mentoring Master and Mentor Teachers in Summer 2021.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.1 a4:** Utilize Ball State Professional Development School (PDS) Liaisons to guide professional learning communities and conduct training sessions.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** A particular highlight of the MCS-BSU partnership is the availability of Ball State faculty from the Teachers College to serve as professional liaisons to the schools. In weekly visits to their assigned MCS school, the liaisons work with the principal to determine staff needs and ways that they might assist. PDS Liaisons serve as thought-partners to the school principal and support classroom teachers.

**Next Steps:** The PDS liaisons will continue in the elementary schools providing teacher support. In second semester of School Year 2020-21, two Ball State PDS Liaisons began serving the secondary schools: a math specialist and a literacy specialist. Their role is to provide professional learning to the content area teachers related to curriculum and best practices instruction.

**Strategy 2.2 Develop administrators that know and support the use of instructional best practices by teachers.**

- ◆ **Action Step 2.2 a1:** Create the MCS Teacher Evaluation Rubric based on best practices in instruction, including cultural responsiveness and classroom management.

**Progress Toward the Goal: Completed**



**Evidence of Progress:** The MCS Strategic Plan recognized the importance of creating a teacher evaluation process that was aligned with educational best practices, and would hold teachers accountable to demonstrating those practices in their classrooms. As a first step, district leadership and school principals worked with NIET to discuss and determine the core aspects of exceptional classroom instruction based on research and best practices. This resulted in the district adopting the MCS Teacher Evaluation Rubric in 2020-21. This tool consists of a rubric style rating system in four domains (Figure 2.1). Before adoption, MCS shared drafts of the rubric with the MCS Director of Diversity and key stakeholders with edits made as suggested.

Figure 2.1 MSC Teacher Evaluation Rubric: Teaching Skills, Knowledge, and Professional Performance Standards

Instruction	Environment
1. Standards and Objectives 2. Motivating Students 3. Presenting Instructional Content 4. Lesson Structure and Pacing 5. Activities and Materials 6. Questioning 7. Academic Feedback 8. Grouping Students 9. Teacher Content Knowledge 10. Teacher Knowledge of Students 11. Thinking 12. Problem Solving	1. Expectations 2. Managing Student Behavior 3. Environment 4. Respectful Culture
Planning	Professionalism
1. Instructional Plans 2. Student Work 3. Assessment	1. Growing and Developing Professionally 2. Reflecting on Teaching 3. Community Involvement 4. School Responsibilities

- ◆ **Action Step 2.2 a2:** Train principals and assistant principals in conducting constructive, self-reflective, thoughtful observations and discussions using the MCS Teacher Evaluation Rubric.

**Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** With the evaluation rubric’s adoption, focus turned to principal knowledge and skill development in conducting teacher evaluations aligned to the adopted classroom best practices. During the summer of 2020, NIET provided training focused on an in-depth analysis of the MCS Teacher Evaluation Tool, which is based on standards of best practice. Principals gained a common and clear understanding of each standard, in terms of “what this looks like” in the classroom. Training methods included co-observations with the principals by the NIET trainer. The principals practiced rating the



teachers followed by discussions led by the trainer, culminating in shared agreements in rating levels. This process will lead to increased inter-rater reliability across all schools.

The teacher evaluation process includes: (1) a pre-observation teacher-completed form describing the lesson to be observed, (2) the observation, and (3) the post-observation discussion with the principal creating a self-reflective environment for the teacher. Principals began conducting evaluations in the first semester 2020 with a second evaluation conducted in Spring 2021. NIET established individualized support for the principals in Spring 2021, monitored the principals' abilities to conduct consistent and high-quality evaluations, and discussed the findings with district leadership.

**Next Steps:** NIET will continue to support principals to increase inter-rater reliability of evaluations across the district, coaching them on (a) instructional best practices, (b) how to best address learning loss due to the pandemic, and (c) holding honest discussions with teachers of strengths and areas where changes are needed.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.2 a3:** Develop a communication plan in order to discuss the purposes and processes of the MCS Teacher Evaluation Tool with the teachers.

#### **Progress Toward the Goal: Completed**

**Evidence of Progress:** The communication plan, developed in Summer 2020, followed the MCS Strategic Plan with the ILTs delivering information to the teachers. Each ILT determined how and when to share the evaluation tool in their school in Fall 2020. The ILTs explained each teacher standard and provided instructional examples for various grade levels. The district's progress checks have determined that the teachers' response to the evaluation tool has been generally positive.

### **Strategy 2.3 Expand administrator and teacher awareness and application of culturally competent practices.**

**Rationale:** Cultural competence is the ability to understand and interact effectively with people from a diverse array of cultures and backgrounds. The demonstration of cultural competence is the willingness to learn about, respect, and accept the cultural practices, varying perspectives, and worldview of others. Cultural competence is one of the two foundational principles of the MCS Innovation Plan:

Culturally Responsive Practices: We, as a school district, promise to recognize and respond to our learners' cultures in all aspects of our teaching and interactions, ensuring an equitable education for all (pg. 10).

- ◆ **Action Step 2.3 a:** Create the District Culturally Relevant Teaching and Learning Cadre (now known as the District Equity Team), provide training in knowledge of and skills in cultural competency, and develop a training program for MCS.

#### **Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**



**Evidence of Progress:** In 2019, MCS created an organizational structure to address the foundational principle of culturally responsive practices comprised of a singular District Equity Team and School Equity Teams in each school. The District Equity Team (DET) includes a diverse group of individuals including the CEO, Assistant Superintendent, Director of Elementary Education, Director of Diversity, Student Assistance Coordinator, a school board member, and several principals and teachers.

Meeting on a regular basis, the DET determines appropriate actions and strategies to carry out the vision of ensuring an equitable education for all learners. The Director of Diversity follows up on the DET proposed actions, ensuring implementation through trainings and resources. An example of the DET's actions to a current issue was its review and editing of the CEO's Black Lives Matter statement, released in June 2020. The statement was published widely and was well received by the school community and stakeholders throughout Delaware County and beyond with the district receiving positive emails and phone calls.

**Next Steps:** The DET will continue to meet and provide timely, culturally-appropriate responses to issues as they arise. The DET will also be actively involved in the implementation of the cultural competency training program addressed herein.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.3 b:** Implement the cultural competency training program with all MCS staff to improve classroom and school climates for learners and families.

#### **Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** As mentioned earlier, each school formed a School Equity Team in Summer 2020 to create an intentional and regular focus on cultural competency and culturally responsive practices. This includes not only building-wide training and instruction, but also training in classroom environments and in adult-to-student interactions. School Equity Teams (SET) may include building administrators, teachers, and student assistance coordinators. The SET implements the actions determined by the District Equity Team (DET) and the Director of Diversity. In Summer 2020, culturally responsive trainings began. The responsibility for implementation was allocated between the DET and/or Director of Diversity, and the School Equity Teams (SETs). Multiple trainings occurred during SY 2020-21 (Table 2.3).

**Training: "Take Time for Cultural Competence"** - In Spring 2020, the Director of Diversity assembled a number of current, school-based academic articles with questions for staff to discuss at the beginning of each staff meeting. Teachers individually read the assigned article before the staff meeting with the SET leading the discussions at the meetings. As such discussions can be challenging when talking substantively about race, equity, cultural norms, and history, the SET members received training (Table 2.3) to facilitate the discussions, often termed as, "critical conversations—where the stakes are high, the emotions are strong, and opinions differ." Ball State faculty and an external expert provided the training.

**Next Steps:** The discussion sessions continued during second semester 2021 and will be evaluated in the summer to determine continuance or changes needed to increase teacher learning.

**Training: "Implicit Bias"** - Culturally responsive practices require the examination of implicit bias—an unconscious belief about a group of people. Examining one's implicit biases allows recognition of existence in each of us; moreover, the training is geared toward eliciting changes in beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors of and toward other cultures. It is also central to creating culturally responsive schools. MCS is



committed to all employees receiving culturally responsive trainings as described in the strategic plan. Initial training began Summer 2020 for employees that hold daily interactions with our learners. This included teachers, administrators, school resource officers (SROs), and school bus drivers/aides. The partnership with Ball State allowed expert faculty to conduct the trainings (Table 2.2). MCS also contracted with an outside consultant to assist with trainings.

Table 2.2: Cultural Competency Trainings Completed

Training	Date	Audience	Participants	
			Number	Percent
Implementing the “Take Time” curriculum	July 2020	School Equity Teams (SET) a) Teachers b) Administrators c) Board member	a) 47 b) 19 c) 1	
Implicit Bias	July 2020	School Equity Teams (SET) a) Teachers b) Administrators c) Board member	a) 47 b) 19 c) 1	
Implicit Bias Micro-Aggression	July 2020	a) School resource officers b) School bus drivers c) School bus aides	a) 17 b) 33 c) 18	a) 100% b) 94% c) 95%
Implicit Bias	August 2020	a) Teachers b) Administrators	--- ---	a) 100% b) 100%

**Next Steps:** Training on other topics, such as Micro-Aggression, which SROs received, and Poverty-Based Simulation will be expanded to additional staff over time.

**Strategy 2.4 Create a culture of excellence in teaching and leading.**

**Rationale:** In many professions, including education, opportunities for advancement serve as incentives. At MCS we provide these opportunities on a broad basis so teachers and administrators can increase their knowledge and accept greater responsibilities through training, endorsements, certifications, or degrees, and progress upward on the MCS career ladder.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.4 a:** Design and implement a career ladder for teacher leaders of excellence, including master and mentor roles, and compensate with supplemental pay.

**Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** Spring 2020, MCS created two career opportunities for classroom teachers – becoming a Master Teacher or a Mentor Teacher. As described earlier, Strategy 2.1 includes MCS selecting one teacher at each school to serve as a Mentor or a Master Teacher in April 2020. NIET provided seven days of Core Leadership Training in July 2020 to these teachers.



**Next Steps:** Training for Master and Mentor Teachers will continue with NIET, focusing on utilizing the MCS Teacher Evaluation Tool to determine classroom teachers’ areas of needs and provide assistance in improving those areas. In addition, the Principal Evaluation Rubric will be developed in Fall 2021 with implementation occurring later in the year.

## B. Recruitment and Retention of Teachers and Educational Leaders

**Rationale:** MCS’s goal is to create a diverse, high-quality teaching and leadership force, which will occur through the district’s intentional actions in recruitment and retention. A proven strategy in this area is providing various types of incentives to encourage educators to initially take employment with the district, and once there, to continue as long-term employees.

**Strategy 2.5 Offer incentives to new and returning teachers.**

- ◆ **Action Step 2.5 a:** Continue to explore additional incentives for new teachers to locate in Muncie, such as financial assistance.

**Rationale:** Teachers choose where they teach and with a nationwide teacher shortage, school districts compete for teachers. Incentives are ways to increase attraction for working in a specific district. MCS is committed to creating incentives that correspond to today’s teachers’ needs and wants, and to improve the communication about the availability of those incentives.

### Progress Toward the Goal: On Track

**Evidence of Progress #1:** Salary increases serve as a financial incentive for both new graduates of teacher education programs and for current MCS teachers. Over the past decade, the district’s financial struggles precluded salary increases. With surrounding districts providing yearly increases, MCS witnessed a yearly exodus of staff.

To address this issue, the newly appointed MCS school board provided one-time stipends to teachers, support staff, and administrators in December 2018. In 2019, the new CEO and the board agreed that increasing salaries was a critical priority to hire and retain high-quality educators. With careful examination of the budget and expansion of funding sources, MCS is committed to regular salary increases, as were provided school years 2019-20 and 2020-21 (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: Salary Increases by Groups: Teachers, Support Staff, and Administrators

Staff	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020	2020-2021
Teachers	0	0	\$ 700 each (stipend)	\$ 701,000	\$ 645,000
Support Staff	0	0	\$ 500 each (stipend)	\$ 73,000	\$ 99,000
Administrators	0	0	\$ 700 each (stipend)	\$ 30,000	\$ 59,000
Total	0	0	\$ 344,750* (stipend)	\$ 804,000	\$ 803,000

\*Includes stipends of \$350 for part-time teachers and \$200 for part-time support staff.





**Evidence of Progress #2:** Across the U.S., a shortage of teachers exists in certain fields:

- Mathematics (e.g., algebra, calculus)
- Science (e.g., biology, chemistry)
- Special Education
- World Languages; Dual Language
- Dual Certification Courses—higher level courses providing both high school and college credits
- Project Lead the Way (PLTW), course-specific

Dual certification educators receive special certification to teach high school courses that are of a high rigor, allowing students to receive both high school and college credits for the course. PLTW teachers hold certificates to teach specific courses, such as computer science. To encourage teachers with these specialties to become MCS teachers, the district offers a financial incentive of \$1,000 per semester (\$2,000 per year) for teachers of these courses. Further, the district offers incentives to place teachers in other hard-to-fill placements such as mathematics.

The CEO reports:

As compared to the exodus of teachers and administrators in the period between 2010 and 2018, we have witnessed a much lower turnover rate each year with a particularly low rate in 2020-21.

**Next Steps:** MCS is committed to providing yearly salary increases as financially able to meet or exceed corresponding local salary rates. We also are committed to district-wide recognition of teacher and administrator excellence through celebratory events, highlighting achievements at board meetings, on social media and throughout the community, and opportunities for continued professional development, growth, and enrichment.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.5 c:** Promote and provide Ball State’s 50% tuition discount and other discounted services, such as use of the exercise facility and admission to sport events.

**Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** Through the BSU/MCS partnership, the university provides several incentives for our educators. To encourage continual teacher education, BSU provides a 50% tuition discount for up to six credit hours per semester. As many teachers strive to obtain a Masters’ Degree or an endorsement in a specialty area, the tuition reduction is a highly sought benefit for teacher recruitment and retention.

**Next Steps:** MCS is offering a number of incentives to recruit and retain staff and will continue to evaluate the current strategies and consider additional ones, and ensure that the incentives are prominent in new teacher marketing materials.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.5 d:** Support teachers through professional learning and career ladder opportunities.

**Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**



**Evidence of Progress:** As an incentive to new teachers, MCS provides initial summer training for new hires to understand and learn the MCS curriculum and adopted research-based instructional best practices and to become familiar with the Muncie community and MCS students and their families. Master and mentor teacher career ladder opportunities were also introduced.

**Next Steps:** MCS will continue to determine and provide additional career ladder opportunities.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.5 e:** Hire highly-qualified bilingual educators for dual language immersion classrooms through the development of a talent recruitment campaign that includes stipends as an incentive.

**Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** During SY 2020-21, all bilingual classrooms were taught by highly qualified bilingual educators. The bilingual teachers received an additional financial incentive to encourage their employment at MCS.

**Next Steps:** MCS will develop a talent recruitment campaign, specific to bilingual educators, as it strives to increase the number of bilingual classrooms each year.

### **Strategy 2.6 Establish culturally responsive processes and communication.**

**Rationale:** MCS is committed to the development of a culturally responsive community in all aspects of the schools. This includes recruiting and hiring high quality staff that reflect the diversity of the student population. The CEO and board determined the need for a person to lead this initiative and in 2020 established a new position—Director of Diversity—to reflect the district’s commitment.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.6 b:** Review and edit communications, both written literature and digital media, to reflect cultural responsiveness.

**Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** In summer 2020, the Director of Diversity and the Chief Communications Officer began meeting on a regular basis to review current communication processes and products. Their focus is to ensure all MCS communications reflect cultural responsiveness. They are considering all communication audiences—teachers and staff, students, parents/families, and the community

**Next Steps:** The Directors will continue to meet and develop a plan to addresses changes and improvements in communication efforts.

- ◆ **Action Step 2.6 c:** Examine past recruiting efforts and increase marketing efforts to sites reflecting a diverse, high-quality workforce.

**Progress Toward the Goal: On Track**



**Evidence of Progress:** The Director of Diversity and the Assistant Superintendent, who oversees human resources, began regular meetings in Summer 2020. They are evaluating past staff recruitment practices and have determined the need to investigate the addition of recruiting from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

**Next Steps:** The Director will continue to meet with other administrators to determine and implement changes in recruitment efforts.



## Pillar III: Student-Centered Teaching and Learning

**GOAL 3: Our schools provide an exceptional academic experience for all learners, embracing the whole child, with a commitment to meeting individual needs.**

**Rationale:** “We believe in a learner-centered approach to education—one that focuses on the needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles of the students rather than on the conveniences of adults” (MCS Strategic Plan, 2020-2025, p. 12).

**COVID-19 Pandemic and Classroom Instruction:** This pillar pertains to how, when, and where students are taught and how those affect learning. Due to the pandemic, MCS faced extensive challenges in educating all learners while keeping students and staff safe, and adhering to ever-changing state and federal health and safety requirements. MCS responded with an extraordinary number of changes -often with daily adaptation as scientists and doctors learned more about the virus. In describing progress during this time, the narrative presents changes and limitations to the original plan due to the pandemic. The following timeline of governmental requirements and our timely and continual responses demonstrate our dual commitment to safety and education (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Changes in Instruction Due to COVID-19 Pandemic School Years 2019–20, 2020-21

School Year	State Requirements	MCS Instructional Response
March, April, and May 2019-20	Governor closes schools with remote learning only allowed	<p><b>Preschool, Elementary:</b> Paper learning packets distributed weekly; Teachers asked to contact students twice weekly.</p> <p><b>Middle School, High School:</b> Devices provided to students with coursework available online. Learning packets distributed for those students without internet connectivity, (25% of families). Teachers asked to contact students weekly to assist with projects and to maintain connection with students and families.</p>
2020-21	Governor allows schools to open and encourages districts to work closely with local health departments	<p><b>Summer 2020:</b> Extensive time, money, resources spent on securing devices, hotspots, a K-12 virtual learning program (VLP), and preparing for fall on-site school opening and extended distance, e-Learning.</p> <p><b>Fall 2020:</b> All 4,807 students receive a device and 750 receive hot spots for home internet connectivity.</p> <p><b>Fall 2020:</b> Families select from the two instructional options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3,429 students enroll for on-site learning</li> <li>○ 1,378 students enroll for remote learning</li> <li>○ 67 enroll in on-site PreK learning</li> </ul>



## A. LEARNER-CENTERED CLASSROOMS and SCHOOLS

**Rationale:** Creating student-centered teaching and learning requires attention to the physical layout of the room (desk arrangements and seating) and the mode of instruction. The physical layout of the classrooms changed in SY 2020-21—not based on best learning practices for students but on social distancing required by the pandemic. The second goal of adding to the mode of instruction through technology rose to the forefront with MCS implementing a comprehensive and effective e-Learning program in a short amount of time.

### Strategy 3.3 Establish a cohesive and effective e-Learning program.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.3 a:** Execute technology management services, equipment, and processes to meet the needs of staff and students K-12.

#### Progress Toward Goal: On Track

**Evidence of Progress:** On March 19, 2020, Indiana’s Governor mandated that all schools close their buildings. Instruction could continue through remote learning. MCS knew that many students were without access to a computer at home and/or internet services. Moreover, public libraries were closed and other community agencies, where students normally accessed computers, were also shuttered.

The CEO and the MCS Board were well aware of a lack of devices and connectivity for many MCS students with the MCS Strategic Plan including numerous strategies and processes to overcome this barrier to learning. But the process was to occur over several years due to the financial costs and the manpower required to load and deploy the large number of devices. Thus, in Spring 2020, MCS could not respond immediately with computer-based, distance learning options as the majority of our elementary students did not have the computer and internet connections needed. Accordingly, for elementary students, our faculty and staff created weekly paper learning packets that were distributed along with meals.

As the pandemic continued, Governor Holcomb instructed all schools to close for the remainder of the year on April 17, 2020. In conjunction with this, the district developed a plan to provide devices and connectivity for each student as soon as possible. The efforts to implement the plan were intensive with multiple new responsibilities for administrators in determining and meeting student and teacher technology needs (Table 3.2).



Table 3.2. New Technology Actions Completed Due to COVID-19

March 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. MCS Informational Technology (IT) determines short-term needs. ➤ <b>March 19: Governor Closes Schools for In-Person Learning until May 1</b></li><li>2. MCS communicates with families and the community about “e-Learning” (electronic-learning) beginning for all students that have electronic devices on March 23. Students without technology receive paper learning packets.</li><li>3. MCS provides teacher training for conducting e-Learning lessons through Schoology (the MCS online learning management system)</li></ol>
April–August 2020
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <b>April 17: Governor Closes Schools for Remainder of Year</b></li><li>4. MCS conducts family surveys regarding electronic needs, investigates options, and orders devices (Chromebooks and iPads) and hotspots (a small device given to families to provide internet connectivity). IT receives from suppliers, unpacks, and conducts inventory.</li><li>5. MCS issues devices and hotspots to students, following a CDC interaction protocol process, including policies regarding appropriate use of devices and insurance.</li><li>6. MCS provides parent training on devices, a document of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions), and a Help Desk, with daily assistance times and staffed by IT employees.</li><li>7. BSU offers and delivers professional development to MCS teachers on effectively teaching in a remote environment.</li></ol>

- ◆ **Action Step 3.3 b:** Enhance educators’ capacity to use technology efficiently and effectively, especially with Schoology, the learning management system (LMS).

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** During the past 18 months, MCS focused on enhancing educator capacity to use technology efficiently and effectively for both current and newly hired teachers. The implementation of these actions and tasks is the responsibility of the MCS Instructional Technology Coach. The coach provides training and support to teachers—individually and in small and large groups—specifically in the district-wide adopted programs: (a) Schoology, the learning management system (LMS) and (b) the specific content-based curriculum and instruction programs (to be discussed in later strategies). Schoology is an online system for teachers to manage and organize their educational materials and to conduct online courses and lessons. Due to COVID-19, learning to use Schoology effectively and efficiently rose to the highest priority in the second semester of 2019-20 and Summer 2020 as the schools closed. Training and support for Schoology during the last three years included:

**2018-19: Schoology Support by IT Coach**

- Provided individual assistance to teachers via email request.
- Created an online teacher site with videos, help documents, and resources.
- Developed monthly newsletters with links to new tools, help videos, and assistance topics.
- Offered regular, on-site school assistance on a rotating school basis.



### **2019-20: Schoology Support by IT Coach**

- Provided 42 training sessions on a variety of topics for teachers at different skill levels.
- Continued other supports from previous year.

### **2020-21: Schoology Support by IT Coach**

*Note:* All teachers are now required to use Schoology and Blending Learning tools according to the document of expectations. “Schoology Educator Norms” (includes skill descriptions).

- Provided guides and/or video to address each required skill.
- Offered eleven Schoology training sessions for teachers.
- Developed a Schoology Help course and YouTube page for teachers.
- Created a parent/guardian Schoology video followed by two townhall WebEx sessions with a live question and answer session.
- Maintained weekly schedule to be at each school site routinely to provide training and address questions.
- Continued other supports from previous year.

**Next Steps:** The IT coach will continue to provide training and support and implementation of other applicable action items as determined.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.3 c:** Establish a consistent and rigorous e-Learning program for grades K–12 to meet short and long-term educational needs including a virtual program offering.

**Rationale:** An essential MCS strategy for instruction is the development of an electronic presence for curriculum, lessons, projects, and assignments that is available to students on the computer or other devices. Termed, “virtual learning programs” (VLP), this action step became critical to teaching during the pandemic as it empowered students to continue to learn remotely through online interactions with their teachers and fellow students.

### **Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** With intensive and quick action, MCS responded to the need for learners to have the choice to learn remotely for Fall 2020. The district established the MCS Virtual Learning Program (VLP) for Grades K-12, a new venture SSY 2020-21. In partnership with *FueLED*, the new VLP allowed student access to the full complement of *K12 Online* assignments, digital resources, and communication tools. MCS K-12 teachers provided live delivery of curriculum content via student devices. To support students, families, and staff, MCS developed the VLP Handbook with student and family expectations when using VLP, along with troubleshooting ideas for technical difficulties, and a communication flowchart for addressing issues and gaining information.

A total of 1,378 students (34 percent) selected enrollment in the VLP program for Fall 2020. During second semester 2020-21, the IT coach continued assist teachers on the effective use of technology in their lessons. To support students and families, the district hired a Student Assistant Coordinator (SAC) to conduct home visits for those struggling with virtual learning.

**Next Steps:** For SY 2021-22, the IT coach will continue to train teachers in order to strengthen the VLP and to use technology appropriately in their academic lessons. In Summer 2021, the teachers that are



new to MCS will receive extended training concerning Schoology, Power Train, and other district-wide programs.

## B-1. LITERACY

**Strategy 3.5. Develop and implement with fidelity a K-5 core literacy (English language arts) curriculum with best practices instruction, and valid and reliable assessments.**

**Rationale:** In Spring 2018, MCS administration and staff, along with Ball State faculty, realized the need to analyze current literacy instruction and curriculum and make changes based on results of IREAD3 and ILEARN state assessments. After studying several programs, staff selected the Fountas & Pinnell Classroom Literacy program. The district secured funding sources, ordered the materials, and established a rigorous professional development training schedule. From December 2019 through August 2020, Fountas and Pinnell consultants conducted a number of training sessions for teachers, principals, interventionists, master and mentor teachers, and district administration.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.5 a:** Curriculum: Develop a district-wide literacy curriculum map, grades K–5, aligned to the Indiana Academic Standards, English/Language Arts: K–5 and ILEARN Blueprints.

**Progress Toward Goal: Completed**

**Evidence of Progress:** The Indiana State Academic Standards, English Language Arts provides a list of the knowledge and skills of successful readers and writers K-5. The ILEARN Blueprints describe the frequency or likelihood that a standard will appear on the state literacy assessments ILEARN and at third grade IREAD-3. To ensure that a strong alignment existed between the skills students would learn in the Fountas & Pinnell Classroom (FPC) literacy program and the Indiana literacy standards and assessment, an alignment study was conducted. The results, presented in Spring 2019, showed a strong alignment between FPC and the state standards and assessment.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.5 b:** Curriculum: Demonstrate understanding of alignment of adopted Fountas & Pinnell Classroom™ (FPC) reading process to Indiana Academic Standards and ILEARN.

**Progress Toward Goal: Completed**

**Evidence of Progress:** In May 2019, K-5 teachers, interventionists, master and mentor teachers, and elementary principals attended a webinar describing the importance and results of the curriculum alignment.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.5 c:** Curriculum/instruction: Provide district-wide professional development to all K–5 staff through Fountas & Pinnell Classroom consultants to increase awareness, understanding, and teaching of FPC components.





**Progress Toward Goal: Completed**

**Evidence of Progress:** FPC consultants provided onsite training October 2019-March 2020 with virtual training after that time. All elementary staff received multiple trainings of each FPC instructional component: Interactive Read-Aloud, Shared Reading, Reading Minilessons, Guided Reading, and Phonics/Word Study/Spelling (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Professional Learning Provided by Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Consultants

FPC Training	Month/Year	Participants	Number Trained
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmark Assessment I</li> <li>Benchmark Assessment II</li> </ul>	Oct. 2019 Dec. 2019	Master teachers, interventionists, special education resource teachers, principals	45
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom System: Overview of Components</li> <li>Interactive Read Aloud (IRA)</li> </ul>	Nov. 2019	Kindergarten, 1st grade teachers	34
	Dec. 2019	2nd, 3rd grade teachers, principals, master teachers, Ball State Liaisons	46
	Dec. 2019	4th, 5th grade teachers, principals, master teachers, Ball State Liaisons	49
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared Reading (SR)</li> <li>Reading Mini Lessons (RML)</li> </ul>	Jan. 2020	K-5 teachers, principals	110
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guided Reading (GR)</li> </ul>	Feb. 2020	K-5 teachers, principals	117
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phonics, Word Study, and Spelling (PWS)</li> </ul>	May 2020	K-5 teachers, master teachers, interventionists	100

To personalize and reinforce the trainings, MCS created a newsletter reiterating major training points and links to FP online resources. To develop consistency of use, leading to fidelity of implementation, MCS developed a teacher guidance document, “Consistent Literacy Practices” and other teacher resources. We extended the FPC literacy program to the preschools in Fall 2020 with preschool teachers receiving training August 2020.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.5. d1:** Instruction: Increase teachers’ fidelity of implementation through school-based Master and Mentor Teachers selected for their exceptional teaching skills, and as trained by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET).

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** This action was begun in 2019-20 through NIET’s training of master and mentor teachers and is described in full in Pillar II.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.5 d2:** Instruction: Develop and implement a digital learning curriculum and materials for the Fountas & Pinnell Classroom literacy program, grades K-5.

**Progress Toward Goal: Completed**



**Evidence of Progress:** MCS adopted the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy (“FPC”) program, spending extensive time and funds on training and materials in 2019-20. In response to the pandemic, MCS aggressively pursued adapting it for e-Learning. MCS partnered with SW Allen School District (Fort Wayne) as they had adopted FPC the year before MCS. MCS hired a consultant to lead the project alongside two of Southwest Allen’s consultants, the MCS Director of Elementary Education, and the IT coach. Initial meetings and planning occurred in June 2020 with full implementation in School Year 2020-21 (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Elementary Literacy: Process to Transition to Literacy Digital Learning

<p><b>July 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of template electronic slides for each grade level and for each literacy component following the SW Allen model by the IT coach.</li> <li>• Development of daily literacy maps for grade levels K-5, based on SW Allen’s maps with changes made as needed for MCS by reading consultant.</li> <li>• Training by SW Allen to a teacher cadre on the development of literacy slides.</li> <li>• Implementation of a review process by SW Allen of teacher cadre’s slides to ensure quality, consistency, and validity to the FPC curriculum.</li> </ul>
<p><b>August 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of FPC monthly reading maps for K-5, for the first four weeks of school, 110 lessons, and FPC digital learning slides.</li> <li>• Training of principals and mentor/master teachers on FPC digital learning process and materials by SW Allen.</li> <li>• Virtual presentation to all K-5 teachers and staff of FPC digital learning by SW Allen on teacher workday before the start of school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>August - September 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Fountas &amp; Pinnell, using a blended approach.</li> <li>• Support from master/mentor teachers to classroom teachers.</li> <li>• Continued development of FPC digital learning slides and monthly reading maps by grade level cohort and literacy consultant.</li> </ul>
<p><b>October 2020 - March 2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of digital materials and literacy maps by teacher grade level teams.</li> <li>• Review of materials and maps by Director of Elementary Education.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spring - Summer 2021</b></p> <p>Grade-level teacher cohorts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed FPC curriculum maps and digital materials and made adjustments based on the first year of implementation.</li> <li>• Added Indiana ELA standards to the lessons taught to ensure alignment on a daily basis.</li> </ul>

**Next Steps:** Teachers reported the literacy curriculum maps to be highly useful and will continue to use them to conduct their daily lessons with the benefit of all elementary schools presenting the same lessons during the same week. The corresponding visual materials that were developed in SY 2020-21 also served their purpose well by providing provide virtual learning materials during the pandemic. In SY 2021-22, the literacy virtual materials will be used as a teacher resource (not required), except for “snow days” and other times that the school has an unplanned closure.



- ◆ **Action Step 3.5 e1:** Assessments: Utilize two formative assessments to routinely evaluate student progress by comparing current level to past level: Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Systems and i-Ready.

**Progress Toward Goal: Completed**

**Evidence of Progress:** In prior years, the teachers used various formative assessments for literacy and math. Teachers routinely noted that results were often not helpful in identifying student learning gaps nor how to change/add to classroom instruction to overcome those gaps. MCS investigated new assessments based on a set of criteria: alignment to the Indiana State Standards; availability of automatically-generated reports of student strengths and gaps; and built-in online and/or teacher-led activities to remediate learning gaps. The formative assessment *i-Ready* met all criteria and the administrators selected it to serve as the as the formative assessment for both literacy and math, K-5.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.5 e2:** Assessments: Provide training in using the results of formative assessments to make changes in instructional practices and/or provide supports.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** During 2020-21, classroom and special educators received training from *i-Ready* consultants, who also led discussions with principals and master/mentor teachers (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: 2020 1st Semester *i-Ready* Professional Development

Topic	2020-21	Participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting Good Data with <i>i-Ready</i> and Using Online Instruction</li> </ul>	July	K-8, all classroom teachers, special educators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leading <i>i-Ready</i> Implementation</li> </ul>	October	K-8, all administrators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated Instruction &amp; Small Group (Tier I) Instruction Planning; Mid-Year Diagnostics</li> </ul>	November	K-8, all classroom teachers, special educators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual Building Meetings with <i>i-Ready</i> Implementation Specialist</li> </ul>	November	Individually met with elementary/middle school principal and master teacher to discuss building level data from the first diagnostic assessment results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using <i>i-Ready</i> as the State-Required K-2 Dyslexia Screening Instrument</li> </ul>	December	K-8, all reading specialists, dyslexia screening team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and using <i>i-Ready</i> student data for determining growth and planning instruction</li> </ul>	January - May	K-8, all administrators, master teachers met individually at each school to study BOY, MOY, EOY data after each testing cycle; determined growth, links to ILEARN and standards mastery, and focus areas for SY 2021-22
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the <i>i-Ready</i> growth reports</li> </ul>	February	K-8, administrators & teachers attended virtual professional development on using the program tools to assist with filling gaps in achievement.



• Review of MOY <i>i-Ready</i> data and planning for next steps	February	MCS Leadership Team meeting to comprehensively review MOY student data and develop implementation plans
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**Next Steps:** *i-Ready* professional staff will continue to work alongside each school team to study formative assessment results three times a year. Middle school interventionists will receive specific training from *i-Ready* staff.

**Strategy 3.6.** Develop and implement with fidelity a grades **6-8 core literacy** (English language arts) curriculum with best practices instruction and valid and reliable assessments.

**Rationale:** While learning to read begins in kindergarten, and reading to learn—about science and social studies—in fourth grade, middle school is the time to that students must expand their reading skills to be able to understand more difficult academic texts. Knowing that many of our middle school students do not score well on the state reading tests, we will develop instruction and supports to improve their reading.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.6 c1:** Utilize two formative assessments to routinely evaluate student progress by comparing current level to past level: *StudySync* and *i-Ready*.

**Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Evidence of Progress:** Classroom teachers received received training on the formative assessment *i-Ready*, implemented the assessment three times during the of year, and analyzed the student results to determine their literacy needs.

**Next Steps:** Middle school classroom teachers will receive additional training in SY 2021-22 in interpreting formative assessment results and planning and adopting instructional practices that correspond to student reading needs.

## B-2. MATHEMATICS

**Strategy 3.8.** Develop and implement with fidelity a grades **6-8 core mathematics** curriculum with best practices instruction and valid and reliable assessments

**Rationale:** Along with English language arts, mathematics is a foundational content area that all students need to become successful learners, successful in future college and career endeavors. To improve student knowledge in math, MCS will ensure a rigorous curriculum and materials, ensure teachers use research-based practices for teaching math, and utilize formative assessments to determine student learning needs.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.8 d3:** Provide training and oversight in the use of formative mathematics assessments.



### Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages

**Evidence of Progress:** Classroom teachers received training on the formative assessment *i-Ready* for mathematics, implemented the assessment three times during the of year, and analyzed the student results to determine students’ math learning needs.

**Next Steps:** Middle school classroom teachers will receive additional training in SY 2021-22 in interpreting the student, individual results from the formative assessment results and plan and adopt instructional practices that correspond to student mathematical reading needs.

## B-3. SOCIAL STUDIES

**Rationale:** Events occurred in the United States in Spring 2020 that brought MCS and Ball State to the conclusion that the social studies curriculum needed attention. Rather than waiting to review the current curriculum and instruction after mathematics was addressed, a review of the current social studies curriculum showed it to be an urgent task. An MCS/BSU team, led by the MCS Director of Diversity, created an initial strategy and action step and began the work.

**Strategy NEW:** Generate curriculum and teaching methods that promote history through multiple perspectives, promote civic engagement, and honor and represent the diversity and the cultures of the learners.

- ◆ **Action Step NEW:** Ensure curricula and resources represent the history, culture, and experiences of the learners to encourage growth and understanding about self and others.

### Progress Toward Goal: On Track

**Evidence of Progress:** Through the MCS/BSU partnership, Ball State is providing professional development for secondary social studies teachers in how to evaluate the current social studies and civics education curricula and resources to meet the goal of the action steps and to make appropriate changes when needed. The revised social studies and civics education curricula will adhere to Indiana K—12 standards of: Historical Knowledge, Civics and Government, and Geography and Economics. The Director of Diversity coordinates the training.

**Next Steps:** Ball State and secondary social studies teachers will continue to meet on early release days and during the summer to develop and enhance the social studies curricula in this multi-year initiative.

## C. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, FINE ARTS, MATH (STEAM, K-12)

**Rationale:** “STEAM” is a commonly used acronym of five closely connected areas of study: science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics. These fields of study share theories and practices to guide student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. Jobs worldwide are moving towards requiring



STEAM skills. As MCS prepares learners for the future, we must provide them with thinking, skills, and experiences that are STEAM-based.

**Strategy 3.10. Ensure high-quality science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) education.**

- ◆ **Action Step 3.10: a)** Review and select standards-based, hands-on curriculum and materials for science.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** MCS began the process of ensuring high-quality science curricula in Summer 2020. Five of the seven middle school science teachers and three administrators conducted criteria-based reviews of the the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade science curricula and instructional resources, determining the degree of alignment to the Indiana State Standards. Based on the findings, the group conducted realignment of the science curriculum maps and the Indiana Science Initiative (ISI) resources from Purdue University; these resources arrive every nine weeks and allow for hands-on learning experiences. The science teachers at the middle school continued to evaluate and amend materials during Summer 2021.

**Next Steps:** To increase student engagement secondary science teachers will receive training on incorporating “gaming” into the lessons/activities as led by Ball State faculty.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.10: b1, 2)** For STEAM, increase teacher expertise by providing: (1) for the middle schools, training for at least two teachers in PLTW: Innovators and Makers; App Creators; and Medical Detectives; (2) for the high school, training for at least two teachers in PLTW Engineering and Computer Science; and (3) for all PLTW teachers, professional learning opportunities conducted by a PLTW consultant.

**Progress Toward Goal: Completed**

**Evidence of Progress:** As additional PLTW courses and class sections were added, PLTW teachers received training. At the middle schools, one additional teacher received PLTW training in Summer 2020, providing three certified PLTW teachers at each school. At the high school, one additional teacher became certified in Summer 2020 as a PLTW teacher, for a total of two PLTW teachers.

**Next Steps:** For SY 2021-22, the district will examine student enrollment and course completion data and work with the school counselors to determine student interest levels in PLTW and STEAM courses. The district is anticipating increased interest from middle school students as they reach high school due the fact that they completed required STEM/PLTW courses in middle school. Additional PLTW-certified teachers will be provided for high school courses, as needed.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.10: b3)** All teachers of PLTW will receive professional learning opportunities conducted by a PLTW consultant.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** In the elementary schools, Grades 1-5 classroom teacher provides PLTW lessons 3-4 times each week while in the middle school PLTW course-specific certified-teachers instruct Grades 6-8.



To ensure all teachers have a clear understanding of PLTW, in Spring and Summer 2020, all 89 elementary and middle school classroom teachers received training from an PLTW consultant/trainer, including new hires during the school year. Elementary principals and the Director of Elementary also participated in the trainings. During Summer 2021, five elementary teachers received training to become certified PLTW Launch Lead Teachers.

**Next Steps:** In SY 2021-22, MCS will develop a Grades 1-5 train-the-trainers model for selected MCS teachers to become PLTW trainers (This will be a new Action Step). The trainers will provide internal PLTW training, increasing the expertise of MCS Staff and eliminating the cost of hiring external trainers. In Summer 2021, elementary teachers that are new to MCS will receive applicable PLTW training. During SY 2021-22, additional PLTW Launch Lead Teachers will be trained to provide one Lead at each elementary school.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.10 c)** For art and music, increase level of teacher expertise: (1) hire licensed teachers for all elementary schools, with preference to music teachers with instrumental experience; (2) provide collaboration time for teachers to meet across schools to plan and learn; (3) utilize mentor teachers in elementary schools to provide professional learning opportunities, mentoring, and coaching.

#### **Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress - c2, c3:** In Fall 2020, MCS created a block of time for art teachers and music teachers to meet bi-weekly in two districtwide groups. To lead the groups, the district identified a music and an art Mentor Teacher, trained by NIET. Districtwide, the twelve teachers meet in their individual groups, focusing on lesson planning, instructional practices, and resources. During 2020-21, the groups created common lesson plan templates and instructional timelines. With the assistance of the NIET trainer, the groups discussed best instructional practices as presented in the MCS Teacher Evaluation Tool, which includes additions to address the unique learning environments or art and music. (Physical education teachers also meet as a districtwide group and pursue similar goals). With the art and music Mentor Teachers, the teachers received trainings in several areas, such as, instructional strategies, vertical articulation of content language, and lesson pacing.

**Next Steps:** NIET and the art/music Mentor Teachers will continue to provide support and training opportunities. MCS will work towards ensuring licensed music and art teachers in all schools.

### **Strategy 3.11. Extend students' STEAM learning opportunities.**

- ◆ **Action Step a.** For STEAM, implement additional, specific career path courses: (1) for the middle schools—Innovators and Makers, App Creators, and Medical Detectives; and (2) for the high school—Engineering and Computer Science.

**Rationale:** To better prepare students for careers and college after graduation, MSC examined the number and type of Project Lead the Way (PLTW) courses offered, the student enrollment rate, and the student completion rates. The district determined that the number and types of PLTW courses need to be expanded to allow for greater student choice and pursuit of additional career pathways. As middle



school students appeared to lack awareness of the positive impact of STEAM courses on future schooling and employment, the three PLTW courses became mandatory for all students, with one course being added each year 2021-2023 to the middle school required coursework.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress—Middle School:** During school year 2020-21, three, mandatory middle school PLTW career path courses were added as outlined in the MCS Strategic Plan:

- 6th grade: App Creators course
- 7th grade: Innovator and Makers course
- 8th grade: Medical Detectives course

Enrollment increased substantially from as the PLTW courses became mandatory (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: PLTW Student Enrollment: Northside and Southside Middle Schools

Grade–PLTW Course	2019 - 2020			2020 - 2021		
	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	Total	1st Sem.*	2nd Sem.*	Total*
6th - App Creators	55	30	85	112	103	215
7th - Innovators & Makers	114	67	181	130	127	257
8th - Medical Detectives	89	39	128	124	125	249
Total	--	--	<b>394</b>	--	--	<b>721</b>

\* This includes students attending in-person classes only. Due to COVID-19, some students enrolled in the Virtual Learning Program with PLTW not being offered.

**Next Steps:** PWL courses will continue to be a rotation required for all middle school students.

**Evidence of Progress—High School:** Similar to the middle school, the high school initiated a new PLTW course to extend the career pathways. Introduction to Computer Science became a new elective course, alongside two previously offered courses, Biomedical and Introduction to Engineering and Design. Course enrollment rates, noting that the courses are electives, indicate a 32 percent increase from 2019-20 to 2020-21 (Table 3.7). However, enrollment rates are low at 3.6 percent and 6.8 percent for the student population for the two years, respectively .

Table 3.7: PLTW Student Enrollment: Muncie Central High School

PLTW Course	2019 - 2020			2020 - 2021		
	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	Total	1st Sem.*	2nd Sem.*	Total*
Biomedical	13	12	25	14	16	30
Engineering & Design	24	2	26	14	14	28
Computer Science	--	--	--	16	16	32
Total courses enrollment	37	14	<b>49</b>	(28)** 44	(30)** 46	(58)** <b>90</b>

\* Includes students attending in-person classes only. Due to COVID-19, PLTW not offered in VLP.

\*\* Total does not include “Computer Science” to allow for cross school year comparisons.





**Next Steps:** Administration will work closely with the guidance counselors and the Director of Diversity to determine the roadblocks students and families encounter in understanding the value of completing PLTW courses. Ways to eliminate the roadblocks and to increase PLTW student enrollment will be determined and implemented. We believe that by requiring students to complete three PLTW courses in middle school, the students will understand the value of the courses for college and careers and high school enrollment in PLTW courses will increase.

## D. DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION—Spanish and English

**Rationale:** MCS offers a dual-language immersion program at West View Elementary for grades Kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. The English/Spanish program allows students to learn to communicate and think in both languages. Recent research supports the positive outcomes of children learning in dual languages classrooms: increased cognitive dexterity and problem-solving skills; enhanced communication skills, strengthened self-perception and identity; and enriched cultural awareness and diversity. MCS is dedicated to growing the dual-language program to increase opportunities for more learners.

**Strategy 3.12:** Extend opportunities for learners to obtain dual language proficiency in Spanish and English.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.12 a)** Determine and provide curricula, space, materials, and staffing to extend current grades K-2 dual language classrooms at West View Elementary School by one additional grade level each academic year: SY 2020-21 Grade 3; SY 2021-22 Grade 4; SY 2022-23 Grade 5.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** MCS achieved its goal by adding an additional dual language immersion classroom at West View Elementary at Grade 3.

**Next Steps:** In SY 2021-22, a 4th grade dual language immersion classroom will be added at West View.

**Strategy 3.13:** Ensure dual language learners meet academic, language, and sociocultural expectations.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.13 a)** Select, adopt, and implement learner-centered dual language curricula for core subjects: English language arts, Spanish language arts, and Spanish mathematics.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** To ensure that learners in the dual-language program succeed in meeting or exceeding academic expectations, the four dual-language teachers met in the summer and first semester of School Year 2020-21 to review and decide the curricula, with decisions being:

- Adopted *Eureka Math*, a Spanish-language curriculum to increase rigor of math instruction



- Provided *Eureka Math* professional development training
- Provided virtual learning training for teachers due to change to remote learning during pandemic

**Next Steps:** The teachers of dual language will review other curricula and materials and determine changes needed. MCS will provide curricula training as needed.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.13 c)** Implement best instructional practices for content areas through professional learning opportunities for teachers, leading to students demonstrating academic achievement at or above grade levels in all core subjects.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** Best practices instruction relies on ongoing formative assessments to determine student growth and areas of need from the analysis of student data. This allows the teacher to focus and differentiate instruction as needed. To determine student growth, the *i-Ready* formative assessment was introduced in 2020-21 for literacy and mathematics in the dual language program as it was in all elementary classrooms, Grades K-5. Students are assessed in English language literacy (*i-Ready* does not yet have a Spanish language literacy assessment) and in Spanish and English mathematics.

**Next Steps:** The dual language program teachers will routinely analyze the formative assessments to determine growth and create lessons appropriate to student learning needs.

## E. PHYSICAL and NUTRITIONAL HEALTH

**Rationale:** We know that our learners' physical health relates to their ability to concentrate and learn, and we commit to a new emphasis on physical and nutritional health through multiple partners addressing nutrition and physical activity.

**Strategy 3.14. Improve learners' physical health through physical education classes and extended physical opportunities in the elementary schools.**

- ◆ **Action Step 3.14 b)** Develop the In-School Physical Activity Program to improve learners' physical health in partnership with Ball State University and IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital (*See Strategy 3.15*).
- ◆ **Action Step 3.14 c)** Create age-appropriate physical health activities, as designed by Ball State students, and compile into written form (*See Strategy 3.15*).
- ◆ **Action Step 3.14 d)** Implement physical health activities (e.g., active learning, "Brain Breaks," expanded recess) throughout the school day, as led by Ball State students, initially (*See Strategy 3.15*).



**Strategy 3.15. Improve learners’ nutritional health through extended nutrition opportunities for families of students in Grades K-5.**

- ◆ **Action Step 3.15 a)** Develop the In-School Nutritional Program to improve learners’ health in partnership with Ball State.
- ◆ **Action Step 3.15 b)** Develop age-appropriate, nutritional health educational lessons integrated into the curricula in partnership with Ball State.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** In partnership with IU Health and Ball Memorial Hospital, Ball State faculty created the “MCS Child Health, Physical Activity, and Nutrition Education Initiative” in 2020. The project’s focus is to improve student physical health through (a) using physical activities for classroom breaks, (b) infusing nutrition education into the curriculum, and (c) providing services from the Healthy Lifestyle Center (HLC) to the teachers and staff at the school.

During Spring and Summer 2020, extensive planning and preparation occurred. In October and November 2020, Ball State faculty and graduate students led a 6-week pilot program at Southview Elementary, consisting of weekly nutrition lessons, physical activities suggestions for teachers, a weekly HLC newsletter to all staff, and family newsletters with at-home activities and nutritional recipes. End-of-pilot surveys identified changes to be made such as offering more HLC activities and providing BSU graduate students to assist in classroom physical activities. In second semester SY 2020-21 second semester in adding the program the program to South View for 10-weeks and to Grissom for 6-weeks

**Next Steps:** *To be updated.* For SY 2021-22, the health, physical activity, and nutritional program will continue at Grissom and South View and extend to Longfellow Elementary.

## F. PREPARING FOR COLLEGE and CAREERS

**Rationale:** The MCS goal for all learners is to succeed, not only in school but in life. That success depends on MCS endowing a broad array of opportunities for our learners. We propose to increase the breadth and depth of career education opportunities for all MCS students beginning in first grade. Our goal is to ensure that all learners achieve career awareness and foundational employability skills.

**Strategy 3.18. Extend current and create new courses to build Grades 1-12 learners’ awareness and interest in high-demand jobs.**

- ◆ **Action Step 3.18 a:** For Grade 7, provide a new course—Business and Information Technology—to develop learner skills in career planning, basic business, personal financial responsibility, and using technology as a tool.

**Progress Toward Goal: Completed**



**Evidence of Progress:** The new course for 7th graders, Business and Information Technology, began in Fall 2020. This one semester class focuses on four broad areas: (1) career exploration; (2) basic knowledge of Word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, and communications software technology; (3) personal financial responsibility; and (4) basic business— communications, marketing, and entrepreneurship. The domains and standards for each area provide many opportunities to engage students in learning essential business content and in applying software technology as a tool. The course aligns to the Indiana State Standards and the Workplace Readiness Indicators. Enrollment indicates a “fair” student interest rate with high completion rates (Table 3.8). MCS anticipates increased enrollment as students become aware of this new offering.

Table 3.8: “Business Information Technology” Course: Enrollment and Completion Rates–7th Grade

Students	2020-21	
	1st Sem.	2nd. Sem.
Enrolled	98	58
Completion Rate	100%	100%

**Next Steps:** MCS will determine the response to and the effectiveness of the course through enrollment and completion rate data and teacher evaluations by the principal.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.18 b:** For Grade 8, provide a new course—Preparing for College and Careers—focusing on career options and college planning in preparing for high school.

**Progress Toward Goal: Completed**

**Evidence of Progress:** In Fall 2020, MCS implemented a new elective course for 8th graders, Preparing for College and Careers. In this course, learners explore their personal goals, interests, and aptitudes as they relate to career concepts. Learners develop an awareness of the 16 national career clusters and Indiana’s College and Career Pathways, while learning about traditional and nontraditional careers. For each career, students learn the level of education and type of training needed. Experiential learning includes field trips, guest speakers, and virtual options. To receive credit for this course, students must earn a C or higher. The course aligns to the Indiana State Standards and the Workplace Readiness Indicators. This new course also shows “fair” interest with students and an increasing completion rate of the two semesters (Table 3.9).

Table 3.9: “Preparing for College and Careers”: Enrollment and Completion Rates–8th Grade

Students	2020-21	
	1st Sem.	2nd. Sem.
Enrolled	41	54
Completion Rate	73%	100%

**Next Steps:** MCS will determine the response to and the effectiveness of the course through enrollment and completion rates and teacher evaluations by the principal.



- ◆ **Action Step 3.18 c:** For Grades 11–12, establish a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway, Engineering Technology program, offering college credit through partnerships with Purdue Polytechnic, Ivy Tech, Magna International (PowerTrain), and Mursix Corporation.

**Progress Toward Goal: Completed**

**Evidence of Progress:** In Fall 2020, the MACC launched a new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway, Grades 11-12, Engineering Technology and Advanced Manufacturing (Table 3.10). In partnership with Ivy Tech and local businesses Magna and Mursix, MACC now offers Industrial Automation and Robotics. Through a partnership with Purdue Polytechnic, MACC provides a new course, Advanced Career and Technology Education. Purdue offers dual credit, allowing students to save money with the courses at no-cost and to earn credits while in high school. Ivy Tech courses provide students with hands-on skills and the potential to earn up to 12 college credits per year.

Through this new pathway, students gain exposure to 21st Century manufacturing technology that is needed in today's workplace for potential employment immediately after high school. For both courses, students may choose an internship to gain workplace experience at a number of manufacturing sites in the Muncie area during their senior year.

Table 3.10. MACC Engineering and Technology Program: Grades 11-12

Courses	Student	2020-21	
		1st Sem.	2nd Sem.
Industrial Automation & Robotics	Enrollment	14	11
	Completion Rate	--	73%
Advanced Career and Technology Education	Enrollment	7	7
	Completion Rate	--	71%

**Next Steps:** The MACC will provide increased awareness of the new programs/courses through multiple communication modes to students, families, and the community in an effort to increase enrollment.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.18 d:** For Grades 11–12, establish new CTE courses, Industrial Automation and Robotics.

**Progress Toward Goal: Completed**

**Evidence of Progress:** MCS increased the number of dual-credit CTE courses in School Year 2020-21. Muncie Central High School added nine additional courses:

- Industrial Automation and Robotics: Ivy Tech dual credit course
- Advanced Career and Technical Education: Purdue University engineering course with dual credit through Purdue
- Anatomy and Physiology
- Medical Terminology
- Introduction to Computer Science (PLTW)
- Advanced Placement: Computer Science Principles



**Next Steps:** MCHS completed and exceeded in implementing this action step. Rather than the one course, eight other dual-credit courses were added. MCS will continue to determine students' needs in offering future courses and will continue to work on growing enrollment in these courses.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.18 e1:** Expand courses to second levels: Human and Social Services I, II; Education Professions I, II; and Nutrition Science Careers I, II.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** In school year 2020-21, the expansion of a course into an advanced level occurred for Human and Social Services II.

**Next Steps:** In the upcoming year, MCS will pair dual credit advanced courses for Education Professions II and Nutrition Science Careers II.

**Strategy 3.19. Increase job placement and employability skills and experiences for Grade 12 learners.**

- ◆ **Action Step 3.19 b:** Extend Career and Technical Education (CTE) learners' on-the-job experiences through embedded internships during the capstone, second-year of CTE pathway programs.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** Over the years, the Muncie Area Career Center has developed strong job-embedded learning experiences for the CTE students by partnering with local businesses and organizations. The partnerships require communication, organization, and oversight with the businesses and students that are well-prepared for the internships. Current CTE pathways have aligned professional job experience through these community partnerships:

- Construction Technology: Partners are construction companies
- Electrical Technology: Partners are electrical contractors
- Cosmetology: Partner is Amber's Beauty School
- Dental Careers: Partners are dental and orthodontics offices
- Health Science: Partners are long-term care facilities
- Early Childhood Education: Partners are preschool and early elementary classrooms

As an example, MACC was one of several partners working alongside the local Department of Veterans Affairs in Fall 2020/Winter 2021. The Construction Technology students worked with contractors to build the home of a local veteran who was living without water or electricity. According to their instructor,

The students were able to get hands-on, real world experience with every aspect of home construction, and they were a significant part of a community project that benefitted someone in need. It's hard to say what they enjoyed more—learning how to properly hammer, cut, measure, and saw in all weather conditions or knowing they were giving the gift of a new home to someone who served our country. They were all very proud of the completed project!



**Next Steps:** MACC will continue to provide appropriate and extensive job-embedded experiences for CTE students, including opportunities that will support the community. MACC will seek new partnerships with companies and organizations in the fields of Interactive Media, Fire and Rescue, Criminal Justice, and Automation Technology.

**Strategy 3.20. Strengthen opportunities for high school learners to earn college credits.**

**Rationale:** The MCS Strategic Plan identifies several action steps to provide college acceleration opportunities, allowing learners to earn college credit while in high school. MCS offers advanced placement and dual-credit courses. Advanced placement (AP) courses, created by the College Board, are college-level courses for high school students. AP classes prepare students for an AP exam, and when a student earns a three or higher on the exam, the course may be eligible for college credit. Dual credit, another option, is also known as concurrent enrollment. With a dual-credit course, the student earns both high school credit and college credit for the course. Benefits from completing dual-credit and AP courses include earning college credit while in high school, saving time and money by completing college credits before entering college, improving students’ time management and study skills, and providing students with opportunities to act on future career and college goals.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.20 a:** Implement a plan to increase enrollment in and completion of advanced placement (AP) and dual-credit courses.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** The Ball Brothers Foundation supports MCS in incentivizing Advanced Placement courses for students through its partnership with the Teacher Investment Program of Indiana at the University of Notre Dame. This membership allows MCHS teachers of Advanced Placement courses in math, science, and English to participate in high quality professional development by content directors. AP teachers participate in summer institutes, a fall conference, and mock AP exam readings, organized by Notre Dame staff. The Foundation also provides financial support for MCS to award students an incentive of \$100 for each AP test passed with a score of a 3, 4 or 5 for schools up to 2019-2020. For the 2019-2020 school year MCHS students passed 151 exams. This performance resulted in cumulative financial awards to our students of \$15,100 (Table 3.11). In SY 2020-21, the number of AP exams passed was 127, a decrease from the prior year.

Table 3.11: Advanced Placement Courses: Exams Passed and Awards Received

AP Courses	2019-20	2020-21
Exams Passed	151	127
Financial Awards	\$15,100	NA*

\*Grant no longer exists to provide financial awards

While the highest percentage of students enrolled in AP courses are white, MCS increased enrollment among students of color in 2019-2020 (Table 3.12). Determinations for SY 2020-21 cannot be made as data is not yet available from IDOE.



Table 3.12: Advanced Placement Courses: Enrollment by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
	Student Groups	Enrolled in AP	Student Groups	Enrolled in AP	Student Groups	Enrolled in AP	Student Groups	Enrolled in AP
Total	1,388	---	1,341	---	1,300	---	1,261	Data not yet available
Black	23.8%	8.7% (13)	24.3%	8.6% (14)	23.5%	11% (16)	23.3%	
Hispanic	4.0%	6.0% (9)	5.6%	9.8% (16)	5.7%	11% (16)	5.0%	
Multiracial	9.1%	6.7% (10)	9.9%	5.5% (9)	10.9%	7.5% (11)	12.2%	
White	62%	77.0%(115)	59.0%	74.8%(122)	59.0%	69% (101)	57.0%	

Students that receive free and reduced lunch (FRL) represent 60-70% of the high school population and account for 29% of students enrolled in AP courses. Data analysis for gender reveals a 50/50 ratio of female to male students enrolled in the high school and a similar ratio of 50/50 males and females enrolled in AP courses (Table 3.13). Determinations for SY 2020-21 cannot be made as data is not yet available from IDOE.

Table 3.13: Advanced Placement Courses: Enrollment by Economics and Gender

FRL Gender	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
	Student Groups	Enrolled in AP	Student Groups	Enrolled in AP	Student Groups	Enrolled in AP	Student Groups	Enrolled in AP
Total	1,388	---	1,341	---	1,300	---	1,261	Data not yet available
FRL	68.9%	29% (44)	70.1%	29% (47)	59.2%	29% (43)	58.7%	
Female	47%	49% (73)	47%	48% (78)	47%	51% (74)	45.5%	
Male	53%	51% (77)	53%	52% (85)	53%	49% (79)	54.2%	

**Next Steps:** MCS aims to increase racial and economic diversity among students enrolled in AP courses.

◆ **Action Step 3.20 b:** Implement a plan to increase enrollment and completion in Early College High School.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** An additional opportunity for students to receive college credits is the MCS Early College Program. This program allows students to complete an associate degree while completing the Indiana Academic Honors Diploma by earning dual credit through Ivy Tech College. MCS is one of only 31 fully endorsed Early College Programs in Indiana. To be admitted into the program, students must meet the application requirements and be selected for participation. MCS is examining student enrollment trends to determine the root causes of Early College enrollment mirroring AP course enrollment with





Black students and students from poverty showing lower enrollments than the percentage of student population that they represent (Table 3.14, Table 3.15).

Table 3.14: Early College High School: Enrollment by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
	Student Group	Enrolled in Early College	Student Group	Enrolled in Early College	Student Group	Enrolled in Early College	Student Group	Enrolled in Early College
Total	1,388	---	1,341	---	1,300	---	1,261	303
Black	23.8%	18%	24.3%	23%	23.5 %	15.0%	23.3%	15.1%
Hispanic	4.0%	7%	5.6%	7%	5.7%	4.0%	5.0%	3.0%
Multiracial	9.1%	8%	9.9%	10%	10.9%	10.0%	12.2%	12.0%
White	62%	65%	59.0%	60%	59.0%	70.0%	57.0%	69.0%

Table 3.15: Early College High School: Enrollment by Economics and Gender

FRL Gender	2017-18		2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
	Student Group	Enrolled in Early College	Student Grou	Enrolled in Early College	Student Group	Enrolled in Early College	Student Group	Enrolled in Early College
Total	1,388	---	1,341	---	1,300	---	1,261	303
FRL	68.9%	53%	70.1%	52%	59.2%	53%	58.7%	
Female	47%	57%	47%	56%	47%	58%	45.0%	57.0%
Male	53%	43%	53%	56%	53%	42%	54.1%	42.0%

**Next Steps:** MCS will dig deeper into the data and determine the barriers faced by Black students and students in poverty, and implement processes and solutions to eliminate the barriers to their participation in the Early College High School Program.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.21 b:** Develop and implement CTE Pathways Marketing Plan for MCS students and families to increase awareness of local employers, available job options, and knowledge of and enrollment in CTE courses.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** As Career and Technical Education no longer looks the same as it did just a few years ago, the Muncie Area Career Center strives to provide information to help students and families understand the valuable and rich opportunities these courses provide. In the past MCS offered written information regarding the benefits of CTE, including a description and list of courses, employment and wage prospects and more, through brochures and flyers. In 2020-21, MCS recognized the need to expand and enhance its communication efforts about CTE.



MCS is creating a series of professionally produced videos featuring current students promoting the CTE benefits and the wide array of program offerings at the MACC. These first-person testimonials will highlight the hands-on learning, the professional certification opportunities, and the high-level instruction that is available through MACC. In 2020-21, MCS will share the videos with the area high schools that feed into MCS. The videos will also be featured on the MCS website with the goal of boosting enrollment and creating more awareness for the general public.

**Next Steps:** Staff will continue to market the CTE programs using the videos and other sources.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.21 d:** Expand capacity of the Graduation Academy and MCHS online programs by employing a Work-Based Learning Coordinator to implement a pilot program to further develop learners' employability skills and to facilitate job placement opportunities.

**Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Evidence of Progress:** MCS provides multiple opportunities for students to obtain or recover the credits needed to graduate. These opportunities are collectively housed under the Muncie Central Online Program and Graduation Academy. The online programs provide students that need to recover course credits online either in-person or through a hybrid model. Online learning includes additional flexibility and self-paced learning to better meet student needs. Students may meet with the online program instructor on a one-to-one basis or in a small group. MCS changed the design of these programs in 2019-20 with notable increase in students enrolled, credits earned, and number of students graduating between the first semester and the second. A similar trend occurred in first and second semester of SY 2020-21 with a record number of credits earned—364—by the students enrolled.

Table 3.16: MCHS Online Program for Credit Recovery: Enrollment, Credits, and Graduation

Students–Credits– Graduates	2019-20		2020-21	
	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.
Students enrolled	31	53	43	58
Credits earned	72	210	103	364
# Graduated after program	0	17	5	12

The Graduation Academy is held at Central High School and students participate during the school day or during summer school. Students are enrolled in the high school and work to recover credits while taking other classes. Learner progress is closely monitored and celebrated. Data shows increases in the number of students enrolled from 2019-20 to 2020-21 in the summer (Table 3.17).



Table 3.17: MCHS Graduation Academy for Credit Recovery: Enrollment, Credits, and Graduation

Specifics	2019-20		2020-21			2021-22	
	2nd Sem.	Summer	Summer	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	Summer I	Summer II
Students enrolled	89	NA	61	104	124	183	154
Credits earned	523	NA	NA	338	704	127	96
Graduates	27	NA	NA	14	NA	2	1

NA = Not Available

## G. EXTENDED OPPORTUNITIES for LEARNING

**Rationale:** Extended Opportunities for Learning are the supports MCS provides to address student learning gaps as related to the two summer months students are out-of-school. The MCS Strategic Plan will address this gap by providing extended learning experiences for students both after school and in the summer. However, due to the pandemic, many of the summer camps and other experiences could not be held in 2020 but many were able to be held in Summer 2021.

### Strategy 3.23. Provide extended learning opportunities in literacy and STEAM.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.23 a:** Expand afterschool and summer program opportunities in Grades K–5 at Grissom and South View elementary schools through a partnership with the Muncie YMCA, with a primary focus on literacy and a secondary focus on SEL, with up to 80 learners enrolled at each school.

#### Progress Toward Goal: On Track

**Evidence of Progress:** Building on our afterschool programs existing at Longfellow Elementary (Ball State’s MP3 program), MCS endeavors to expand these programs to all of our schools. Toward this effort, MCS prepared and submitted a 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) application for Grissom Elementary School, and the YMCA submitted an application for South View Elementary School in August 2019. In October 2019, 21st CCLC announced the recipients, which included Grissom Elementary.

Working in partnership with Ball State and the Muncie YMCA, the Grissom afterschool program opened in August 2020. Titled “Grissom Gold,” the afterschool program runs from 2:10–5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The YMCA provides staff and equipment to implement its CATCH program which includes physical and nutritional health with family activities. The primary focus area is literacy with an additional focus on character (SEL) development.

With a cap of 80 learners, Grissom Gold began the Fall 2020 program with 28 students, increasing to the current 45 at the end of the first semester (Table 3.18). Second semester showed a dip in enrollment at the higher grades, 3rd-5th. Summer school showed an increase of enrollment in all grade levels.



Table 3.18: Grissom Gold Afterschool Program Enrollment

Grade Level	2020-2021		2021-2022
	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	Summer
PreK and Kindergarten	14	13	17
1st and 2nd Grades	15	15	22
3rd, 4th, 5th Grades	16	11	16
Total	45	39	55

**Next Steps:** MCS and the YMCA planned for the School Year 2021-22 Grissom GOLD program in July. MCS developed new materials for the Family Enrollment Packet and plans to extend its communicative efforts beyond the current principal’s monthly newsletters to the School Messenger, phone calls, and the program’s Facebook page. A week-long training for all afterschool staff in the X elementary schools was conducted during the week of August 9-13. This provided a focus on understanding and teaching literacy, the CATCH program (physical activity and nutrition), and Character Development. During SY 2021-22, MCS will pursue grant opportunities to establish afterschool programs at the other elementary schools.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.23 b:** Create Grade 2 STEAM Literacy Camps through Ball State/MCS’s research-based Camp Adventure program to increase learners’ understanding and interest in STEAM and improve literacy.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** For Summer 2021, two STEAM Literacy Camps for second graders were held at Camp Adventure. The camps occurred Monday-Thursday focusing on hands-on learning in the morning and other topics in the afternoon related to the community such as, a presentation and visit by guide dogs for persons that are blind. The camp in June was led by Ball State with MCS staff observing in order to replicate the camp in July.

Table 3.19 STEAM Literacy Camp: Attendance Summer 2021

	Daily High	Daily Average
June Camp	44	37
July Camp	50	41

**Next steps:** MCS will evaluate the success in the STEAM Literacy Camp, specific to topics and lessons, to determine areas for the following summer. It will consider new topics as well, as a means to increase enrollment.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.23 c:** Implement Grades 9-12 Marching Band Summer Camp to continue development of learners’ musical skills and interests.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**



**Evidence of Progress:** Members of the Central High School Marching Band were not able to participate in activities since March 2020 as the Indiana State Music Association cancelled competitions due to COVID-19. With competitions allowed again this summer, Muncie Central invited students from other area schools without marching band programs to participate. About 70 students from Muncie Central were joined by 10 others from Blue River Valley, Wapahani, and Burriss to create the *Spirit of Muncie Marching Band*. Following COVID-19 protocol, the band was successful in numerous local and regional competitions with the capstone of winning first place in Class AAA at the Indiana State Fair Band Day competition.

**Next Steps:** With this year's success, the Central music department looks forward to growing the program next year.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.23 d:** Partner with community organizations/groups to provide extended learning opportunities for MCS students: Innovation Connector - Coding Classes; Motivate Our Minds; Music Skills and Interests; Outdoor Education; Muncie Children's Museum, and the Boy Scouts of America.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** Each group provided unique activities during Summer 2021 for MCS students. This provided a number of choices for family selection when students were out of school.

**Next Steps:** MCS will continue to work closely with these and other community groups that have the ability to provide extended learning opportunities for students.

**Strategy 3.24. Provide extended opportunities for learners to plan for college and careers.**

- ◆ **Action Step 3.24 c:** Partner with education-oriented organizations: Indiana GEAR-UP, Project Leadership, and others to provide students with extended-day learning opportunities.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress: GEAR-UP Partnership.** For School Year 2020, MCS focused on continuing its partnership with Indiana Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP). The goal of GEAR-UP is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. MCS is one of only ten GEAR-UP partner districts in the state with programs at the two middle schools and the high school.

To increase student academic achievement, beginning Fall 2020, GEAR-UP staff (hired by Purdue) served MCHS sophomores and juniors two nights a week as an after-school program (Table 3.19). With staff housed in the school buildings, they were able to provide support to learners to meet academic and social and emotional needs. In Fall 2020, the GEAR-UP staff led an "SAT Boot Camp" for all high school teachers and staff, promoting their understanding of being "college-ready" and learning to use data to determine student readiness. Student participation in after-school tutoring increased from 2018-19 to 2019-20 with a slight decrease in 2020-21, possibly impacted and reduced participation in afterschool activities (Table 3.20).



Table 3.20: GEAR-UP After-School Tutoring: 10th and 11th Grade Student Participation Rates

2018-19		2019-20		2020-21	
1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.	1st Sem.	2nd Sem.
65	81	251	137	164	171
146		388		335	

**Evidence of Progress: Project Leadership Partnership.** As a local non-profit serving Delaware and Grant counties, Project Leadership partners with schools and community to increase high school and post-secondary completion rates. One of their provisions is Scholarship Lab, which educates students and families about postsecondary financial aid opportunities. MCHS students and families participate in the labs and receive assistance in completing the online forms for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The lab is open during the school day and in the evenings with one-on-one consultation for students completing the form. Because of the pandemic, in-person meetings were paused. Instead, the 2020-21 virtual lab opened in October with 25% of seniors completing the application at the end of the first semester 2020.

**Next Steps:** Project Leadership will work with Muncie Central administration to identify other ways to engage with students and their families. MCS will continue to work with all community partners.

**Strategy 3.25. Provide transition opportunities for learners: Kindergarteners entering elementary school; 6th graders entering middle school, and 9th graders entering high school.**

- ◆ **Action Step 3.25 a:** For incoming kindergarten learners, develop the Starting School Experience to understand and participate in daily routines and structures to become familiar with teachers and classmates, to build confidence, and to lower anxiety.
- ◆ **Action Step 3.25 b:** For incoming Grade 6 learners, create the Moving to Middle School Experience to increase comfort level, build confidence, improve team building, and lower anxiety, in partnership with Project Leadership.
- ◆ **Action Step 3.25 c:** For incoming Grade 9 learners, provide the Moving to High School Experience to increase comfort level, build confidence, improve team building, and lower anxiety, in partnership with Project Leadership.

**Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages:**

**Evidence of Progress:** Providing incoming kindergartners, sixth graders, and ninth graders with a time to experience their new school before the first day of school was an exciting proposition for staff and families alike. Similar to many events in the past year, this event changed from in-person to virtual for students entering grades 6 (middle school) and 9 (high school) with a higher percentage of 6th graders



participating than 9th graders (Table 3.21). Due to COVID-19 constraints, kindergarten students did not participate this year.

Table 3.21 “Transition to New School” Event: Families Invited and Attended

Incoming Students	2020-21	
	Enrolled (Invited)	Attended (Students)
6th Grade	Northside: 130	101 78%
	Southside 114	69 61%
9th Grade	256	109 43%

**Next Steps:** MCS staff has begun planning for full implementation of the transition program to occur in July 2021 and will partner with Project Leadership. MCS will strive to increase the number of participants at all three school levels.

**Strategy 3.26. Provide extended learning opportunities for meeting learners’ specific needs.**

- ◆ **Action Step 3.26 a:** Deliver Grade 3 Reading Academy, personalized, targeted reading instruction to learners that did not pass IREAD-3.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** The IREAD-3 Camp was held June 1-11, 2021. The students attended each weekday morning to sharpen their skills in preparing to retake the Indiana third grade reading test. A total of 129 students attended (Table 3.22).

Table 3.22: IREAD-3 Summer 2021 Camp: Enrollment and Attendance

	Enrolled	Attended
East Washington	63	46
South View	90	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>129</b>

**Next Steps:** MCS identified the need to improve the correspondence between individual areas of reading gaps, e.g., phonics, comprehension, and instruction specific to that need. A group of highly-effective of third-grade teachers will be identified to design and curriculum that is specific to IREAD-3 remediation. Training of Summer IREAD-3 teachers will be included, as needed, for a strong and cohesive implementation of the curriculum.

- ◆ **Action Step 3.26 b:** Offer Grades 9–12 MCHS Blended Summer Learning Experience to advance graduation pathways and/or recovery course credits through online instruction with a teacher present, as needed.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**



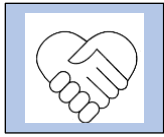
**Evidence of Progress:** MCHS offered online summer school for students wanting to work ahead to free up their schedule for more offerings or to recover credits. In 2019-20, MCS changed the design of the program to improve student success. The number of students participating, the number of credits earned, and the number of students that earned credits increased substantially over the past two years (Table 3.22).

Table 3.22: Summer High School Courses to Advance Graduation Pathways or Recover Course Credits: Enrollment and Credits Earned

Students	Summer 2018	Summer 2019	Summer 2020	
	(One session offered)	(One session offered)	Session I	Session II
Enrolled	69	146	149	92
Earned Credits	27	86	135	75
% Students Earned Credits	39%	59%	87%	

**Next Steps:** MCS will continue enhancing the program for learners and strive to to increase student participation, earned credits, and course completion rates.





## Pillar IV: Social and Emotional Learning

**GOAL 4: Our educators will gain new understandings and practices to guide our learners in maturing toward appropriate social and emotional behaviors and attitudes as related to self and others, in relationships, and in decision-making.**

**Rationale for Pillar and Goal:** Like other schools across the United States, MCS' student population is growing increasingly diverse, with learners coming from different social, ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds. To meet the needs of all of our learners, MCS is extending its attention beyond academics to social and emotional learning (SEL). SEL creates a foundation for safe and positive learning and enhances students' ability to succeed in school, careers, and life. SEL functions best with coordinated school, family, and community efforts centered on developing five key skill areas for learners: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

**Strategy 4.1 Establish districtwide frameworks and structures needed to implement a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for learners' academic, social, and emotional learning.**

**Description of MTSS:** In supporting our students' social and emotional learning (SEL), MCS's goal is to implement a K-12 multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). As with academic learning, learners vary in their social and emotional skills. With a goal of reducing behavioral and disciplinary issues through student SEL growth and maturation, the MTSS framework provides a proactive and preventative approach to support students. MTSS consists of three tiers of learner support with each one providing more support than the previous one.

- Tier I: for all learners, taught by their classroom teachers using a district-adopted SEL curriculum.
- Tier II: for learners needing additional support with small group meetings 2-3 times a week with a specialized teacher, i.e., counselor, behavior coach.
- Tier III: for learners needing intensive support with one-on-one meetings 1-2 times a week with a specialized interventionist, i.e., school counselor, psychologist, or behavior specialist.

**NOTE: MTSS is not special education.**

- It is support for all learners, inclusive of the whole child approach: cognitive, communication, social, emotional, and physical learning and development.
- Prior to the 21st century, social and emotional learning was considered the purview of the family.
- Recently, schools and communities realized that many children need additional support in both areas and are providing that support in multiple ways.



- ◆ **Action Step 4.1 a:** Develop an MCS philosophy/set of beliefs regarding social and emotional development and classroom best practices which are representative of the diversity of the student population, and in collaboration with Ball State, use it to guide curriculum and materials selection, discipline policies, classroom instruction, and professional learning opportunities for teachers and administrators.

#### **Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Evidence of Progress:** As an initial step in addressing the SEL pillar, MCS partnered with Ball State to plan SEL support. BSU faculty in fields related to social and emotional learning serve as “ambassadors.” In their role, the ambassadors bring their knowledge and experience to assist in numerous ways. In 2019, an initial SEL committee, which included the ambassadors, formed to discuss social and emotional learning, offering research summaries and suggesting SEL curricula and screening instruments. In developing the SEL strategies and action steps for Pillar IV, the committee began to create the MCS SEL philosophy, which will be formally expressed in the near future.

**Next Steps:** MCS will develop and launch formal written and visual representations of their beliefs concerning social and emotional development and corresponding and appropriate responses and supports expected of all MCS staff.

- ◆ **Action Step 4.1 b:** Make changes to policies and written documents to align to MCS philosophy about social and emotional development and corresponding classroom best practices, and that reflect the cultural diversity of our student population, in collaboration with Ball State, emphasizing the fact that MTSS encompasses academic, behavior, and social emotional areas. Edit all district and school documents (e.g., Student Handbook) to indicate changes, and implement a plan to inform learners, families, and other stakeholders of the changes.

#### **Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Evidence of Progress:** MCS reviewed and changed policies to align with its beliefs about social and emotional development with the release of the 2020-21 Student and Family Support Guide/Handbook. The Handbook now reflects the MCS philosophy concerning positive behavioral interventions and supports.

**Next Steps:** With the assistance of the Ball State ambassadors, MCS will review additional student policies and guidelines, making changes related to SEL. MCS will also develop and implement a coordinated plan to inform learners, families, and other stakeholders of the changes and the underlying purpose and reason.

- ◆ **Action Step 4.1 c:** Determine and obtain the resources needed to implement MTSS, such as staff, training, space, materials, screener, and schedules, e.g., identify teachers at each school to provide timely and effective MTSS interventions at Tiers II and III.

#### **Progress Toward Goal: On Track**



**Evidence of Progress:** The Director of Special Education/Coordinator of SEL supervises the MTSS program. She receives assistance from the MTSS Leadership Team, comprised of Ball State faculty (ambassadors), MCS administrators, school psychologists, and a board-certified behavior analyst. The MTSS Leadership Team meets twice a month. In School Year 2020-21, the team addressed the logistical needs for each elementary and middle school to begin implementation of MTSS.

- **Staffing**
  - Tier I: Since classroom teachers implement the SEL curricula and provide initial interventions, no additional staff was required.
  - Tier II, Tier II: Principals identified experienced SEL staff to implement the interventions which included MTSS School Team members, Ball State practicum students (8 total), and an extern and an intern.
- **Space.** Building principals found quiet and non-distracting spaces for teachers to meet with small groups or individual students.
- **Materials.** The MTSS Team reviewed the current MCS K-8 SEL curriculum, *Second Step*, and determined to continue with it. For Tier II and III, the team selected a new curriculum, *Ripple Effects* (see Action Step 4.1 d).
- **Screening Instrument.** The Ball State SEL Ambassadors recommended and MCS adopted the *Student Risk Screening Scale* (SRSS) to screen students for SEL support. Classroom teachers use the SRSS rating scale of 0-3 to detect learners with certain characteristics or behaviors, such as extreme shyness or anxiousness (forms of internalizing) or being noncompliant, aggressive or defiant (forms of externalizing). Early recognition of such behaviors allows for early provision of student support.
- **Schedules.** MTSS teams, including the building principal or designee, determine when Tier II, III interventions will occur, based on staff availability and the number of students needing support. Scheduling becomes more complex in middle and high school as student schedules are more individualized.
- **Implementation of the SEL curricula.** In K-5, classroom teachers present the *Second Step* SEL curriculum on a weekly basis. In the middle school, students use a modified block schedule, with *Second Step* taught during rotations. For the high school, the MTSS Team is reviewing curriculum options.

**Next Steps:** MCS purchased the needed materials, determined space requirements, obtained the appropriate student SEL screener, and ensured adequate staffing during School Years 2019-20, and 2020-21. MCS will purchase additional materials for Tier I classroom management, especially for teachers new to the field or who need additional assistance in this area. The MTSS Team will determine the high school SEL curriculum, and the accompanying training needed for teachers and staff.

- ◆ **Action Step 4.1 d:** Select and obtain Pre-K–12 social and emotional learning curriculum that corresponds to MCS beliefs, ensuring it is culturally responsive and developmentally appropriate.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**



**Evidence of Progress:** In the Spring 2020, the MTSS Team reviewed multiple curricula to determine their alignment to the MCS criteria: evidence-based, culturally responsive, and developmentally appropriate for different age groups of learners. The team determined that the current curriculum for grades K-8, Tier I, *Second Step*, would continue to be used. *Second Step* leads to schoolwide improvement in academic achievement and situational awareness and emotion management through age-appropriate games, activities, and media. For Tier II and III curricula, the committee selected *Ripple Effects* with evidence-based interventions, a focus on educational equity, and inclusion of numerous types of support: motivational counseling, SEL skill building, behavioral interventions, and social empowerment practices. In Fall 2020, SEL providers of Tier II and III interventions received professional development and implemented *Ripple Effects*.

**Next Steps:** Classroom teachers and Tier II and III providers will receive additional training.

- ◆ **Action Step 4.1 e1:** Conduct training on the SEL universal screener, Student Risk Screening Scale (SSRS).

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** With the SEL screener selected in Summer 2020, teachers received training on conducting the screening in November 2020. The director created a screencast which she distributed to building principals to share with their staff. The SEL screener, Student Risk Screening Scale (SSRS), requires 20 minutes for the classroom teacher to complete. The screener lists internal and external behaviors with teachers rating students' behaviors/attitudes on a scale of 0-3.

To ensure the screening of all learners, elementary teachers screened their homeroom classrooms and middle and high school teachers screened their fourth period classes. Usually, teachers will conduct screening twice a year—September and February. However, with the pandemic, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) recommended postponing screenings until students had returned to school for at least twelve weeks. This would allow time for students to adjust to being back in school after the March 2020 school closures.

**Next Steps:** MCS will continue a second SEL screening this Spring to identify students with SEL needs and any changes in those previously identified.

- ◆ **Action Step 4.1 e2:** Design a districtwide MTSS process to (a) Identify learners that need Tier II and III supports; (b) Collect data; (c) Make referrals; and (d) Conduct progress monitoring.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** The MTSS Leadership Team developed an initial process to identify and serve learners with SEL needs and piloted it in School Year 2020-21. The plan will be solidified and implemented School Year 2021-22. In the first step of the process, the school-level MTSS Team analyzes student data, e.g., curriculum-based measures of reading, math, and writing; course completion rates; office discipline referrals; and attendance patterns. Conversations with the learners' teachers are held, as needed. The team makes a data-based decision regarding the need for and level of SEL support—Tier II or Tier III.



**Next Steps:** MCS will formalize the referral process, create a flow chart, and develop other visuals and resources for classroom teachers and families to better understand MTSS. Data will be disaggregated by subgroups to ensure we are culturally responsive and using nonbiased practices.

- ◆ **Action Step 4.1 f1:** Establish an MTSS Team at each school to make data-based decisions, using results from the screening instrument and other data sources and conduct progress monitoring reviews of Tier II and III interventions and supports.

#### **Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Evidence of Progress:** The MCS MTSS Team leads this initiative and determined that to be implemented appropriately each school would need its own team. With direction from the MTSS Leadership Team, in August 2020, principals formed their school teams comprised of the school psychologist, who leads the team; the principal (or other administrative designee); a behavior support member, such as a board certified behavior analyst (BCBA); a school counselor; and an interventionist. The school MTSS teams reflect diverse specialties in both SEL and academics with the members possessing a keen understanding of data-based decision making.

To better gauge progress and establish baseline data, the Ball State Ambassadors and the Director of Special Education completed a school-level assessment to determine the level of current SEL supports to learners. Completed in first semester 2020-21, MCS assessed the schools using the *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports System Assessments*: (a) Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) and (b) Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET).

The BoQ assessment allows teams to (a) examine the Universal (Tier I) implementation fidelity—Are we doing what we said we would do? (b) document whether the Tier I implementation has been effective—Does our implementation have a positive impact? (c) identify strengths and weaknesses in the Tier I implementation—What are our strengths that we can acknowledge? What could we do to improve? The SET is a tool designed to assess and evaluate the critical features of the school-wide effective behavior support system. The data from the two assessments will establish a 2020-21 baseline to compare future growth.

**Next Steps:** MCS will use the results from the SET and BoQ to determine school areas of improvement needed in their MTSS systems. Based on the needs, MCS will provide additional training, coaching and support through the BSU Ambassadors and the district MTSS Leadership Team. Coaching will also be provided for systematically monitoring intervention integrity.

- ◆ **Action Step 4.1 f2:** Provide resources and supports for school-based MTSS Teams to create continuity of implementation of MTSS.

#### **Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Evidence of Progress:** The district MTSS Leadership Team developed several resources and processes as support to the school teams in identifying learners with SEL needs and providing the appropriate supports for them. During School Year 2020-21, various members of the MTSS Team developed four critical supports for the school teams.



- **Electronic Files for MTSS Referrals:** MTSS identification depends on longitudinal data from student records, teacher observational reports, and student artifacts. Maintaining and organizing this data is an overwhelming task when using hard-copy papers. The MTSS Team developed a system of electronic files to house the data, enabling a secure and manageable location for MTSS documents. The electronic files also allow for virtual referral meetings, when needed.
- **Detailed Agenda Template for MTSS Referrals:** In conducting reviews of identified students, all schools need to implement the adopted process of gathering certain types of data, asking specific questions, and reaching an agreed-upon decision about needed supports. The MCS psychologists developed a detailed agenda template to ensure all school teams adhere to the MCS MTSS referral process.
- **MTSS Toolbox for Targeted Intervention:** Social-emotional interventions are similar to instructional practices—there are many, but only some are evidence-based. To assist the schools in selecting the “best” interventions, a MCS psychologist worked with Ball State practicum students to develop a catalog of evidence-based interventions. A hard copy of the catalog is available at each school for classroom teachers to use and for referral meetings.

**Next Steps:** The district MTSS Team received an evaluation from the Ball State ambassadors after the first semester implementation of MTSS. Several of their suggestions will be adopted to address areas of needed growth at the high school level:

- 1) Institute a common process for identifying and referring learners with SEL needs.
- 2) Devise a schedule allowing for regular meeting times for Tier II and III supports.
- 3) Investigate and select a Tier I curriculum for the high school.

- ◆ **Action Step 4.2 e:** Continue participation in the Delaware County Comprehensive Counseling Coalition—Project Leaders.

#### **Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** The Muncie SEL Leadership Team is working closely with the Ball State SEL Ambassador to implement this grant. All school counselors are enrolled in RAMP Ready Ready modules, a self-paced program of support, to enhance the comprehensive school counseling model in each building. This year, the counselors completed the Introduction to BASE camp training.

**Next Steps:** Inspire Success will meet monthly with the school counselors this year to monitor their engagement with the modules and provide ongoing professional development throughout the school year. The MCS Director of Special Education will contact Cradle to Career CAN for SEL program to seek future collaboration.



**Strategy 4.3 Implement the MTSS process of learner identification, interventions and supports, and progress monitoring of academics, behavior, and social and emotional development.**

- ◆ **Action Step 4.3 a:** Increase teachers' and administrators' understanding of MTSS through professional learning opportunities (e.g., purpose and processes, including needed materials to share concerns about students with the MTSS Team, and best intervention practices).

**Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Evidence of Progress:** All MTSS team members participated in a training called MTSS by Domain on March 2021. School psychologists continue to assist teams and individual teachers in understanding the process in each building.

**Next Steps:** IIEP Resource Center will conduct training for district administrators and SEL school teams on the topic of MTSS Data-Based Decision Making in SY 2021-22 with additional trainings added, as well. To increase continuity of instruction in all tiers, master teachers and PDS Liaisons will be added to the MTSS school teams.

- ◆ **Action Step 4.3 b:** Implement process of classroom teachers gathering student artifacts and information to share with MTSS Team, determination of appropriate interventions, monitoring, and sharing results with the team in a continual cycle.

**Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Evidence of Progress:** This year teachers began referring students to MTSS. In SY 2021-22, the SEL Teams will work with classroom teachers to increase their understanding of and use of data from Tier 1 to determine appropriate intervention for a student.

**Next Steps:** SEL Teams will be trained in data-based decision making in September 2021. The teams will then coach and support the classroom teachers in implementing Tier I instructional practices with fidelity. To monitor progress of Tier 1, the SEL Leadership Team will meet twice per month.

- ◆ **Action Step 4.3 c:** Ensure teachers' consistent use of district-wide Tier I best practices for academic and social and emotional development as acquired through professional learning opportunities.

**Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Evidence of Progress:** In Spring 2021, embedded NIET training and PLC clusters continued during the spring semester on a weekly basis. SEL PLCs met biweekly in addition. Counselors, SACs, behavior coaches, psychologists, and our BCBA set individual and team goals to work with teachers in their respective buildings within the district to improve Tier 1 instruction.



**Next Steps:** For SY 2021-22, NIET training and cluster meetings will continue to solidify Tier 1 instruction. SEL PLCs will meet biweekly to establish goals, and training will be offered at the Fall 2021 district-wide summit to support Tier I instruction.

**Action Step 4.3 d:** Implement appropriate Tier 2 and 3 interventions and supports with fidelity, followed by continual and consistent progress monitoring conducted by teachers who are specifically trained.

**Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Evidence of Progress:** With training focusing on Tier 1 during SY 2020-21, attention to Tier 2 and 3 interventions was minimal. The SEL teams relied on basic, “go- to” interventions for support beyond Tier 1. Two areas of need are implementation of the intervention with fidelity and the collection of data to determine needs and progress. Focus is needed on teachers matching the function of the behavior more appropriately and/or the barrier academically.

**Next Steps:** Numerous tasks are required for SY 2021-22 to implement MTSS:

- Catalog all interventions that MCS schools own and determine their purpose.
- Analyze the catalog for gaps and obtain additional interventions to meet those gaps.
- Provide training on data-based decision making for all teachers, including emphasis using formative assessment data and informal work samples to diagnose the barriers to progress, followed by determination of the corresponding evidence-based intervention.
- Provide training on the new metrics involved in determining adequate progress for each building team (school psychologists).
- Create a data collection method to track the number of interventions in each Tier of instruction and to track the metrics for adequate progress/outcomes.





## Pillar V: Family and Community Engagement

**Goal 5:** Our schools are culturally responsive and welcoming places, where, through impactful family and community partnerships, our leaders and educators provide services that aid in the academic, physical, and emotional well-being of learners and families.

**Rationale for Pillar and Goal:** Our families and our community are central to our students' academic and social and emotional growth. We seek to establish welcoming schools, based on culturally responsive practices, and create unique family-centered services and events. We believe that as we grow and succeed as a school system, so will our families and the community.

**COVID-19 and Pillar V:** The inability to have parents and families physically in the school buildings precluded the implementation of most of the strategies and key action steps for this pillar. Events such as Back-to-School-Night and Family Reading Nights could not be held. Parent-Teacher conferences became virtual, and volunteers were not permitted in the school buildings. MCS's goal for School Year 2021-22 will be to fully attend to the goal of increased family and community engagement.

### Strategy 5.3 Enhance supports for students and their families.

◆ **Action Step 5.3 a:** The "Launch the Learner Web of Support" initiative provides each learner with mentorship from and connection with at least five caring adults and includes training for MCS adults and community members as support systems or "anchors," to students and establishes partnerships with community organizations.

- 1) Provide training for MCS adults and the community on serving as "supports" to MCS students, as provided by the Institute for Community and Adolescent Resiliency.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

- 2) Establish partnerships with community organizations, such as United Way of Delaware, Henry and Randolph Counties and the George and Francis Bell Foundation.

**Progress Toward Goal: Early Stages**

**Rationale:** Research shows that youth are more likely to thrive and be successful when there are multiple adults in their lives that nurture and support them. Our Muncie youth vary in the number of adults they have supporting them, with some having none or only one. MCS has pledged to ensure that our learners are supported by multiple adults. To meet this goal, MCS partnered with the Institute for Community and Adolescent Resiliency (ICAR-US) in Fall 2019. ICAR-US has a long and successful history of helping schools and youth-serving organizations build a community of people to support each and



every child, called the “Web of Support.” ICAR-US provides MCS with tools, educational experiences, and coaching and mentoring to guide Muncie adults in intentionally supporting our children and youth.

### **Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** Following discussions and planning with MCS administrators and community partners, the Institute for Community and Adolescent Resiliency launched its initial training in January 2020. The purpose of the two-day workshop was to train “Web of Support Ambassadors” to apply the Web of Support framework to their own lives, to strengthen the connections between students and community leaders, and to equip participants to share the framework with peers and community groups. Over 100 people participated in the workshop, including 50 MCS students, 50 MCS teachers and administrators, and a number of community leaders. Additional key accomplishments in 2020 include:

- Multiple trainings and workshops provided to support engagement.
- Communications systems developed including spotlight profiles shared on social media to highlight Web of Support ambassadors and creation of the Monthly Connections Bulletin email.
- Financial support through grants from the United Way and the George and Frances Ball Foundation.
- Ongoing presentations and trainings for community groups including churches, civic groups and Ball State’s Mentors for Kids.
- Training provided by ICAR-US staff to all MCS teachers and staff during the Fall 2020 professional development day.

A steering committee provides oversight to the Web of Support initiative. Committee members include the MCS CEO, MCS Associate Superintendent, the president of the school board, Ball State officials, staff from a local foundation, and community leaders.

**Next Steps:** The local Web of Support Steering Team is completing an adaptive planning process with ICAR-US to guide the initiative efforts. The impact of the initiative will be supported by a local coordinator and will include continued community presentations, communications, training for youth-serving organizations, development of educational materials, training for middle and high school students, and the implementation of the Student Support Card Inventory.

- ◆ **Action Step 5.3 b:** Create wrap-around community services programs within the schools, such as Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), with services related to mental and physical health, early childhood, food security, tutoring/mentoring, college and career development and/or adult education, in collaboration with partners.

**Rationale:** “Wrap-around community service” is a system of care management for children and their families that began in the U.S. in the 1980’s. Wraparound services in schools are designed to give the learner the support he or she needs throughout the school day, whether the support is academic, social, physical or behavioral. The federal government established Federally Qualified Health Centers, or FQHCs, allowing them to offer care through a sliding fee scale based on ability to pay. The centers are located in underserved areas and meet a stringent set of requirements. They provide comprehensive primary care and preventive care, including physical health, oral health, and mental health/substance abuse services to persons of all ages. The number of FQHCs in Indiana is 209, but few are school-based



health clinics (SBHC). The MCS Strategic Plan describes the development of a school-based care clinic to serve as a pilot with additional clinics housed in other schools in the ensuing years.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**

**Evidence of Progress:** As announced on *Facebook*, July 1, 2020:

*Meridian Health and Muncie Community Schools are bringing the whole package to Muncie Southside Middle School. Meridian Health’s new school-based clinic offers both primary medical care and behavioral and social healthcare - right inside the school!*

*OPEN: Available NOW for Virtual Visits*

*For more information, please visit: <https://www.meridianhs.org/Physical/MeridianSchoolClinics>*

This exciting announcement declared a new partnership between MCS and Meridian Health to serve the needs of our Southside Middle School students and their families—at the school. While most of the visits are virtual due to the pandemic, the numbers and the response by the students, family, and local community demonstrate the need and as evidenced in the increase of visits during the second semester (Table 5.22).

Table 5.22: Meridian Southside Clinic: Patient Visits, School Year 2020-21

Services	1st Semester	2nd Semester
Primary Care (medical services)	10	4
Behavioral Science Services	268	1,090
Licensed Clinical Social Worker	67	162
Flu Shots	103	130
COVID Vaccines	---	151

The responses indicate the strong need for mental/behavioral services, which follows the MCS pledge to support learners not only academically but socially and emotionally. School staff is welcome in the clinic as well. Meridian Health provides marketing and educational materials for MCS to distribute, including “Parents’ Stay-At-Home Tips During COVID-19” and “COVID-19 Stay-At-Home Tips for Kids.” Meridian Health recently added a pediatrician to the school-based health clinic team and is evaluating adding dental services in the near future. The staff anticipates increases in primary care visits as nursing services are added at Southside.

**Next Steps:** MCS and Meridian Health will continually evaluate the services provided and the community’s response and determine changes or adaptations needed, including additional marketing to students and families.

- ◆ **Action Step 5.3 c:** Collaborate with community foundations and non-profits to align strategies and resources in support of MCS students, families, teachers, and staff.

**Progress Toward Goal: On Track**



**Evidence of Progress:** MCS benefits from world-class foundations, non-profits, and community organizations. Muncie is a unique city, with a large number of groups offering time, money, and effort for its schools. The students, their families, and the staff of MCS benefit greatly from the generosity of many. From 2018 to the present, the MCS administration has responded to and received a large increase in grant funding. Local foundations and non-profits often approach MCS with ideas for funding and other supports that align to MCS needs. MCS is grateful for these many partnerships. We view the Muncie community, which most certainly includes Ball State, as our greatest strength.

**Next Steps:** MCS will continue to work strategically to develop relationships with local foundations, non-profits, and community organizations.