What Individuals (and Groups!) Can Do to Help Our Schools

- **Be a guest reader.** MCAS elementary schools need guest readers, particularly for first, second, and third-grade students. You can volunteer to read just one time, on a recurring basis, or during summer school. Contact a school near you for specific dates and more information.
- **Help in the Library.** Volunteers are needed at all schools to help with book check-out, re-shelving and repairing books. Contact any school to volunteer!
- **Donate a book.** The district has a need for books (new or gently used) for students K-12. Donations are welcome anytime and may be donated to schools or used by the annual holiday "Operation Bookworm" book drive for children in need. Bring books to the MCAS Administration Building, 408 S. Carroll Avenue.
- **Donate a musical instrument.** Used instruments of any condition may be dropped off at Michigan City High School, Attn: Band Director. Please include a letter of intent to donate, the serial number of the instrument (if known) and general condition. Please note that we do not need pianos.
- **Mentor a student** through the Safe Harbor mentoring program. Spend an hour a week with students during lunchtime or after school, share a talent or hobby, or promote STEM by mentoring through the Michigan City FIRST Robotics Team or after-school horticulture program. Contact Samantha Henry at 873-2026 x 8750 or shenry@educateMC.net.
- **Tutor** students after school at the middle and high school level, especially in reading or math. Contact Safe Harbor Coordinator Brenda Johnstone at (219) 873-2026 x 8740 or bjohnstone@mcas.k12.in.us.
- **Volunteer for Junior Achievement**. JA teaches students basic concepts of economics, business, and personal finance, and emphasizes the connection between education and students' future success. Volunteers visit elementary classrooms (grades K-6) for 30-45 minutes per week for five weeks. Contact Kris Engle at kris.engel@ja.org to volunteer.
- **Attend concerts, musicals, plays, and athletic events**. Community support of our teams and organizations helps motivate and inspire our students, teachers, and coaches! (You may purchase a season or annual pass for athletics at most varsity sporting events, or call the MCHS Athletic Department at (219) 873-2043. For a calendar of events, visit our website.
- **Donate a used 35mm camera or darkroom equipment** to the photography class at Michigan City High School. (Drop off at MCHS, attn: teacher Cheri Whitler. Contact cwhitler@mcas.k12.in.us, (219) 873-2044 ext 4445 for more information.
- **Stay informed** about our school district. Read our Strategic Plan and attend or watch School Board meetings on our YouTube Channel. Meeting information and links are posted on the MCAS Web site (under the "About Our District" menu).
- **Learn more about education in** Indiana. Visit http://www.doe.in.gov/ for information about academic standards, school data, and much more.
- **Give to the United Way.** The United way supports many local social service agencies that help students with needs they have outside of school. It also assists

MCAS partner programs such as the Safe Harbor after-school program, Kindergarten Countdown, and the Open Door Adolescent Health Center at Michigan City High School. Visit http://www.unitedwaylpc.org/ to donate.

- **Make a donation to Donors Choose** (http://donorschoose.org). Search for Michigan City Area Schools teachers and projects on this site… one of our teachers almost always has a project request listed and donations of any amount are very helpful!
- **Collect art supplies, recreational equipment, and healthy packaged** snacks for MCAS afterschool programs. Contact Brenda Johnstone, bjohnstone@mcas.k12.in.us, (219) 873-2026 to donate.
- **Be supportive of our schools** and our students! Help us make sure residents of our community and beyond have a positive perception of MCAS and where we are headed. If you have a concern or question or want to clear up a rumor, please contact your local school or the Superintendent's office to let us know.
- **Follow** MCAS (and your child's school!) on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. And please share our good news posts and information with your friends!

What Businesses Can Do to Help Our Schools

- **Give employees who are parents (and grandparents!) time off/flex time to attend school events.** Students need to know their families are supportive of them and their academic needs and accomplishments.
- **Give employees time off/flex time to volunteer.**
- **Adopt a school.** What school is closest to *your* business? Consider "adopting" this building, offering support for special projects, job shadowing or field trip opportunities, behavioral incentives, or guest readers. This helps the school and gives your business visibility in the local community. Call the school and speak with the principal today!
- **Assist the Laporte County Career & Technical Education Program.** Donations of building supplies, manufacturing equipment, and items that can be used as academic or attendance awards are needed. In addition, the Career Center seeks internship placements for students, mentors in the trades/business, and guest speakers. Participation in our annual Career Expo is always welcome. Please contact David Notary, Director, at (219) 873-2120, d.notary@mcas.k12.in.us.
- **Advertise in student publications.** The Michigan City High School Alpha Yearbook is a student-led publication; the students work as a team to design, develop, and create the annual book of memories. The students learn leadership, communication, and organizational skills while working with scheduling and deadlines. Purchasing a business ad helps defray the production costs. Ads are low-cost and are seen by close to 1,600 students and their families. For information, contact yearbook advisor Laure Poulin at lpoulin@mcas.k12.in.us or (219) 873-2044, ext. 4544.
- **Support athletics.** MCAS offers a number of sports programs that teach students teamwork, leadership skills, and keep them active and motivated to learn. Contact

the Athletic Office for more information on a wide variety of sponsorship opportunities; (219) 873-2043. The MCHS Booster Club is another excellent way to support athletics. Membership forms are available through the Athletic Office and on the Athletics web site..

- **Exhibit at Career Fairs.** Michigan City High School, the LaPorte County CTE Program, and several other schools host Career Fairs annually. These events showcase companies in our region and present an overview of career possibilities and educational requirements. Contact K-12 College & Career Coordinator Aaron Garrett at agarrett01@mcas.k12.in.us (219) 873-2000, ext. 8310 if you would like to take part in one of these opportunities!
- **Be a guest speaker.** Students need to see how what they are learning in the classroom is relevant to the real world. Contact a school principal to discuss how what you do might tie in. Highest areas of need: Products and services relating to science, technology, engineering, and math.
- **Provide incentives**. MCAS schools appreciate donations of free food coupons, recognition items, gift certificates, etc. that can be used as academic or behavior incentives. Contact your local school if you can help!
- **Spruce up our buildings and grounds.** Consider holding a "cleanup day" for a school in late July or early August, prior to the start of the school year. (Your employees' assistance with weeding, trimming, and trash pickup would be greatly appreciated, to help our buildings look their best!) Contact the MCAS Plant Planning Department to arrange a date and location, (219) 873-2124.
- **Give a scholarship.** Contact the MCHS K-12 College and Career Coordinator Aaron Garrett at agarrett01@mcas.k12.in.us. (Scholarships are also needed to help low-income students attend summer camp and afterschool programs; contact Brenda Johnstone at bjohnstone@mcas.k12.in.us or call (219) 873-2026.)
- **Support the Michigan City FIRST Robotics Program** with mentoring, materials or donations. Contact Brenda Johnstone at (219) 873-2026 or bjohnstone@mcas.k12.in.us.
- **Host field trip visits** by afterschool program participants. Contact Brenda Johnstone at (219) 873-2026 or bjohnstone@mcas.k12.in.us.

What Parents Can Do to Help Our Schools

Michigan City Area Schools

- **Stay connected to your child's school and teacher**. If you have questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out!
- **Be there.** Show an interest *every day* in what happened at school. Review homework assignments, celebrate accomplishments, and make sure your children understand that you are there to support and encourage them. And be sure to attend parent conferences at school!
- **Check your child's grades online.** Visit the MCAS web site (http://EducateMC.net/) for a link to the Power School parent portal, the web-based system that allows parents to monitor grades, attendance, and access forms. Contact your school's secretary if you need login access information.

- **Make academics top priority.** Provide a quiet, well-lit area for homework, and make sure your child has the necessary supplies for school. Be sure schoolwork and grades are done before other activities.
- **Share your talents!** Let your child's teacher and/or the school principal know if you have a particular area of expertise that might be helpful to students. Schools needs guest speakers, guest readers, volunteer tutors, chaperones, "extra eyes" at recess, library volunteers, bulletin board creators, and much more.
- **Make sure your child eats a healthy breakfast** – before school or at school (MCAS cafeterias all serve breakfast, and it is free to all students!)
- **Emphasize attendance.** Schedule vacations and appointments after school or during breaks. Students who miss school – or are tardy – miss valuable instructional time and can quickly fall behind.
- **Purchase educational toys and games for your child.** Ask your child's teacher or principal for suggestions! Always monitor phones, computer games, TV, etc. for appropriateness.
- **Model lifelong learning.** If your children see *you* engaged in learning, it will make a big difference for them. Turn off the TV for a while, put down the cell phone, and read instead – or play board games, visit a museum, write in a journal, or go for a walk.
- **Be active in your school's PTO.** Your school's parent-teacher organization is a great way to stay connected and help your school with important projects. If your child attends Michigan City High School, make sure you are part of the Parent Network, the "electronic" parent group. Contact mchsparentnetwork@gmail.com for information.
- **Keep your child safe.** Make sure your children's health concerns are addressed and communicated to the school, including information on allergies and medical needs, and be sure any medications are administered properly. And be sure your children know you have zero tolerance for drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and bullying.

Note: In order to assure the safety of our students, all school volunteers must complete an MCAS Volunteer Form and will be subject to a criminal background check. Please contact the school office for information. Thank you!

Updated August 2024