



# 2020-21 YEAR END BOARD REPORT

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**WASHTENAW INTERMEDIATE  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
AUGUST 2021





# WASHTENAW ISD

STUDENTS FIRST.

## MISSION

*To promote the continuous improvement of achievement for every student while providing high-quality service to our customers through leadership, innovation, and collaboration.*

## VISION

*To be the leader in empowering, facilitating, and delivering a high-quality, boundary-spanning, educational system that educates all children through an equitable, inclusive, and holistic approach.*

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Don L. Garrett, Jr.**  
**Diane Hockett**  
**R. Stephen Olsen**  
**Dr. Theresa Saunders**  
**Mary Jane Tramontin**

## EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATION

**Naomi Norman**, *Interim Superintendent*  
**Cherie Vannatter**, *Interim Deputy Superintendent*  
**Brian Marcel**, *Interim Associate Superintendent*  
**Merri Lynn Colligan**, *Chief Information Officer*  
**Cassandra Harmon-Higgins**, *Executive Director of Human Resources & Legal Services*  
**Holly Heaviland**, *Executive Director of School & Community Partnerships*  
**Alan Oman**, *Executive Director of Early Childhood Programs*  
**Deborah Hester-Washington**, *Director of Special Education*  
**Sherri Papazoglou**, *Director of Finance*  
**Ashley Kryscynski**, *Communications and Public Relations Specialist*







# WASHTENAW ISD

STUDENTS FIRST.

## BOARD GOALS

Because we put students first, the WISD Board of Education has established these goals, adopting a lens of equity, inclusion, and social justice.

## BOARD COMMITMENT

Resource allocation, policy, and practice is designed to close the opportunity gap to ensure equitable educational access for all students, with a specific focus on achieving an equitable system for students in poverty, students with disabilities, and students of color.



## GOAL #1

Lead, develop, and support a culture of equity and opportunity while disrupting systemic racism in coordinated efforts for underserved students from birth through college and career in Washtenaw County.

## GOAL #2

Cultivate and nurture an organizational culture of equity, inclusion, and social justice by leading sustained education, engagement, and action and intentionally disrupting systemic racism within WISD and our partnering schools and organizations.

## GOAL #3

Advocate for policies and practices that support equity, and inclusion, and the disruption of systemic racism on the local, state, and national levels.

# WASHTENAW ISD YEAR END BOARD REPORT 2020-21

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## GOAL 1:

***Lead, develop, and support a culture of equity and opportunity while disrupting systemic racism in coordinated efforts for underserved students from birth through college and career in Washtenaw County.***

### **COMMUNITY-BASED WORK**

#### **Head Start Summer Preschool Camp**

Thanks to additional federal funds made available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, WISD's preschool team has been able to support extended summer programs operated by three of our delegate districts: Lincoln Consolidated Schools, Ypsilanti Community Schools, and Whitmore Lake Public Schools. Almost 100 Head Start children who were enrolled in the program for the 2020-21 school year are participating in this year's summer program at three locations. The summer activities include a large amount of outdoor time, at-home materials for families, and transition to kindergarten activities and materials for families and children. Instructional staff at each of the three summer programs are also receiving ongoing support from the department's preschool team.

#### **Meeting Basic Needs for Home-Based Birth to Three Families**

Many of our Early Head Start (EHS) parents work in hourly jobs and many families suffered a loss or reduction in employment income throughout the pandemic. This created a significantly increased need for resources to help meet the basic needs of families with very young children. WISD team members have continued to provide families with resources such as diapers, formula, and wipes throughout the pandemic utilizing emergency pandemic relief funding provided to Head Start programs by the federal government.



**Our youngest learners relied on services and supports provided by WISD's Early Childhood team.**

#### **Trusted Parent Advisors**

The Trusted Parent Advisors continued supporting families most impacted by the pandemic. They worked with more than 135 families (many of them on a weekly basis) to provide connections to basic needs like food, and diapers, and support those experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, and isolation from the pandemic. Parent Cafes, designed to build parent social support and resilience are now a mainstay of the Trusted Advisor work. Since January 2021, 125 individual Parent Cafes have been held, nearly one third with Arabic-speaking moms. Parents report they feel less isolated and more secure in their parenting with the support of the Parent Cafes.

This spring, the Trusted Parent Advisors have offered their canvassing expertise for the YCS Boots on the Ground door to door campaign. The Trusted Parents have expanded their skills by facilitating their biweekly team meeting with goal setting, problem solving and future planning. Finally, we are talking with community leaders to develop a sustainability plan for the

Trusted Advisor initiative, working to identify anchor organizations who will support the expansion and ongoing work of a community effort to support family and student success.

### **Great Start Collaborative and the Great Start Parent Coalition**

Great Start Collaborative organizations are using the ABL e Change Organizational Equity Assessment to further their equity work. During the second half of the year, four organizations in the Collaborative started their own organizational equity work based on the self-assessment. In addition, the full Collaborative prioritized gathering feedback from families experiencing inequities to identify possible action for change. Great Start Parent Coalition has also partnered with MSU Extension to support parents of young children during the pandemic by providing virtual parenting classes.

### **Mom Power**

In partnership with the University of Michigan's Zero to Thrive program, WISD and community facilitators conducted two additional Mom Power groups for low-income mothers with young children in Washtenaw County. Mom Power is a 10-week evidence-based treatment specifically designed to target trauma-induced barriers to healthy relationships, as well as provide social support and engagement with local resources and services. Of the 18 mothers who participated in these two groups, 39% identified as Black or African American, 22% identified as White, 22% identified as multi-racial, 11% identified as Middle Eastern or Arab American, and 6% identified as Hispanic or Latinx.

### **Community School Justice Partnership and Truancy**

Community School Partnerships received over 300 direct referrals from local school districts to assist with families who had barriers to education. This number does not include the indirect referrals from other parents, staff members, or community partners. As a team, we were able to assist 99.3% of the families that were referred. The assistance included referrals to HAWC, legal services, Community Mental Health (CMH), 31N Social Workers through the WISD, SURE Moms, Jewish Family Services, Child Protective Services (CPS) Preventions, Corner Health Center, Girls Group, Student Advocacy Center, and more. Over the summer months, although school is not in session, we are still assisting families who have unmet needs and working on building out relationships prior to the start of the 2021-2022 Program Year.

### **Reimagining the Homeless Student Referral and Support Process**

In order to address barriers associated with printing, scanning, and submitting paper referrals, the Community and Schools Partnership team developed a virtual submission process for the Education Project for Homeless Youth (EPHY) to adjust operations in response to the pandemic. Similarly, alternative processes were deployed to allow the continuity of stop gap services to meet the needs of homeless students and families while schools were in remote status and the physical EPHY office was minimally accessible. Despite challenges associated with the pandemic, LEAs and EPHY collectively identified and provided services to 666 McKinney Vento students and their families.

### **Coordinating Mental Health Supports**

To meet the anticipated need for additional mental health support, WISD is leading a network of Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) instructors. YMHFA helps adult staff and family members who work with adolescents ages 12-18 better understand common mental health and substance use issues that emerge during adolescence and how to connect youth with early intervention to mitigate longer term impacts. The YMHFA instructor network has conducted four

trainings for school staff so far and has scheduled two more trainings for the remainder of summer and a series of trainings for Fall 2021.

In addition to training, the Community & School Partnerships team has coordinated direct clinical services to general education youth in crisis, hiring 3.25 FTE Licensed MSW social workers to work directly with youth and bridging needs with the Washtenaw County Community Mental Health CARES team. This team had encounters with more than 200 youth from January 26, 2021, through June 30, 2021.

During the school year, the Community and School Partnerships team continued to convene and provide ongoing support and guidance to the District Crisis Leaders on a monthly basis at the request of the county superintendents. This has created an opportunity for districts to share best practices in managing crisis situations, learn about professional development opportunities in our community, and also serves as a source of support for those district leaders.

### Washtenaw My Brother's Keeper (WMBK)

WMBK refocused efforts on the needs of families and communities as they navigated the challenges of the pandemic. Their Saturday intergenerational breakfasts shifted to a virtual format with both Zoom and Facebook Live formats that were very well attended and frequently featured well known speakers, until they resumed for in-person events in June. Several grants were awarded to WMBK to provide pandemic-related services, such as providing PPE and other items to families. The Formula 734 project that had paused when the pandemic first showed up was restarted and completed. The album was released, and the video documentary was finalized and premiered both in a virtual format and an in-person format. The anchor funding for WMBK was doubled through an agreement with the Washtenaw County Commissioners. A summer program called the CLR Academy was started for children in Ypsilanti on a weekly basis through the summer. And a substantial grant through a partnership with Vera, a national organization, and our Prosecutor's Office, funding WMBK to continue the efforts to work with young men and expand the Formula 734 project.



The national My Brother's Keeper Alliance tweets about WMBK's launch of the CLR Academy.



## **LEA SUPPORTS**

### **WISD Continues Offering Fingerprinting Services During the Pandemic**

After fifteen years of providing “walk-in” services to customers, WISD’s Fingerprinting Office transitioned to “by appointment only” services, which was very successful. It also prompted the opportunity for another HR team member to be fully trained in fingerprinting practices and procedures allowing for an in-person office rotation schedule. This office offered six appointments every day from Monday through Friday of each week and filled nearly every appointment during the year. By implementing COVID-19 protocols, the office helped keep customers, staff, and those doing the fingerprinting safe while fingerprinting over 1,300 individuals between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021, with no reported COVID transmissions.

### **Pandemic Coordination with the Washtenaw County Health Department**

As the year continued, Washtenaw ISD continued to serve as the primary liaison for the Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) on behalf of public, private, and charter schools in the county. During the second half of the school year, primary supports provided included coordinating guidance for increasing the number of students and staff in school facilities and increasing vaccination opportunities for school staff and eventually students and families. One aspect of this partnership included the “Spread Hope, Not COVID” social media campaign that encouraged students, families and staff to stay vigilant in monitoring their health and to get vaccinated when it was possible. “Spread Hope, Not COVID” was a tagline used by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, who fully supported our local use as a way to further reinforce a shared message. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of WCHD and schools across our county, Washtenaw County has led the state in vaccination efforts for the 12–15-year-old population.



### **Responsive Teaching Coalition**

We formed the Responsive Teaching Coalition (RTC) for the 2020-21 school year as a way to collaboratively redefine education with an equity lens. The coalition started with nine active organizational members that represented seven local districts and two county organizations, WISD and the Washtenaw Educational Options Consortium. The RTC focused on “interrupting the status quo in our education system” through planning and coordinating:

- 28 different teaching institute sessions with scholars from across the country such as Dr. Ghody Muhammad, Dr. Bettina Love and Dr. Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz with 25-175 participants in a session.

- A county-wide opening day presentation with nearly 1500 educators.
- A year-long leadership institute with six sessions facilitated by Dr. Gholdy Muhammad.
- Partnerships with Ypsilanti Community Schools, Lincoln Consolidated Schools, and Ann Arbor Public Schools to offer a Responsive Teaching Institute tailored to the district needs with 150 to 500 participants in a session.
- Facilitating a book study of Courageous Conversations with Lincoln Consolidated Schools' building and district leaders.
- Partnered with 5 district libraries in Washtenaw County, to host two virtual community forums.
- Formed a Youth Council program that intentionally seeks to center youth voices.
- Partnered with EMU and RTC Youth Council to host an intergenerational conversation with community members.

### **Tri-County Responsive Mathematics Institute**

In partnership with Wayne RESA and Oakland Schools, WISD began a culturally responsive mathematics institute for educators across 3 counties in Southeast Michigan. The three ISDs hosted a two-week institute to support teachers, pre-service teachers, and students in developing culturally relevant mathematics tasks. This Institute will continue into the start of the 2021-22 school year thanks to a grant WISD received from MDE for over \$300,000 to cover the cost of speakers, materials, and teacher stipends.

### **Early Literacy Coaching Collaborative**

The Early Literacy Coaching Collaborative was formed as a learning team with a regional, multi-year commitment to a systemic approach to supporting culturally responsive, high quality, effective early literacy coaching and leadership across Washtenaw County. It was officially launched in January 2021 after over a year of planning and organizing with 40 coaches and administrators across all 9 local school districts. The purpose is to:

- Build a learning community around effective coaching,
- Address systemic needs for supporting and sustaining a coaching culture,
- Build knowledge and skills in coaching for literacy instruction and literacy leadership development, and
- Establish strong professional relationships to support the ongoing effort.

### **Justice Leaders Expansion**

The pandemic was a unique opportunity for the efforts around our Justice Leaders initiative to grow substantially. This year we offered:

- 17 cohorts of the Core Course (for a total of 37 overall).
- 4 cohorts of the Advanced Course (for a total of 11 overall).
- 2 cohorts of White People Working for Racial Justice.
- Our first cohort of the new EJATT Deep Dive.
- Three workshops on Interrupting Bias & Bigotry.
- One session on Socially Just Celebrations and Holidays.
- Three sessions on Building and Sustaining Equity Teams & Justice Squads.
- One session of Understanding Disability and Ableism.
- Created the Racism Crisis Response for Schools.

To date, over 940 people have participated in the “Justice Leaders: Core Course” through Washtenaw ISD, and almost 40% go on to complete the Advanced Course. Since we began this initiative, we have had 37 cohorts complete the Core Course and 11 cohorts experience the Advanced Course.

### **Southeast Michigan Equity Coalition**

A team of instructional consultants across Southeast Michigan’s intermediate school districts formed a coalition focused on equity. This dedicated group of consultants sought to create a nurturing space to engage in healing and courageous conversations to build alliances and organize for social change. Several members of the WISD Achievement Initiatives team have participated in and helped start this coalition. It will allow deepened efforts around equity and social justice to expand across our region’s ISDs.

## **SUPPORTING WISD STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND STAFF**

### **The Instructional Governance Committee**

In an effort to ensure instructional staff and students’ families received what they needed and had a voice at the table to have a successful school year during COVID and unprecedented times, the Instructional Governance Committee (IGC) was born. This committee consisted of voices from across various departments and positions within our organization; instructional, support and administrative staff. These individuals met biweekly to collaborate, share, and develop best practice strategies to support teachers and families by developing useful tools to streamline workloads and simplify tasks, as well as make recommendations to move forward to the Pandemic Response Team (PRT). The PRT would consider the IGC recommendations, make final recommendations, and then move the final decision forward to the Board of Education for review and approval.

### **Transitioning to In-Person Services for our WISD Students and Families**

In the spring of 2021, students in WISD’s K-Young Adult student programs were able to transition back to in-person learning in a hybrid model. We used data in each of four areas to make this transition decision: Individual Student Needs; Program Compliance; Transportation and LEA Partners; and Health Metrics. Parent and staff surveys also were used to obtain stakeholder voice in this decision.



**WISD staff welcomed back students to classrooms in March 2021.**

### **Early Head Start Meets Technology Needs of Families to Provide Virtual Services**

From the beginning of the pandemic, WISD’s home-based Early Head Start (EHS) program immediately transitioned to provide weekly virtual home visits to families and to ensure that services and supports continued to be provided safely. As access to technology was a barrier for many families, the EHS team worked closely with WISD’s technology department to distribute iPads and/or wireless hotspots to families who needed them to participate in the program and stay connected. Even as home visits are now transitioning back to in-person, the knowledge and experience gained during the pandemic means that virtual visits can continue to be provided to families, especially if there is an illness within the home.



## Human Resources Continues Providing High Quality Customer Service Virtually

Over this past year, the Human Resources and Legal Services department has transitioned to a fully remote work environment. The HR team quickly and successfully adapted to revised methods to provide the same high level of customer service and work productivity. With the use of technology, the HR department was able to:

- Post 81 postings in Applitrack for 62 positions (19 of the postings were re-postings).
- Hold interviews via zoom resulting in the hiring of 36 new staff members, in addition to the internal transfers which occurred.
- Process resignations and retirements for 31 staff members.
- Schedule in-person meetings for those employees needing to drop things off.
- Transition to a new district-wide absence management system.
- Upload professional development activities recorded in Kalpa into MOECS for professional staff certification renewals.

## Meetings with Staffing Groups: Listening to Staff Voices

In an effort to ensure staff voice is heard and represented in administrative decisions, Interim Superintendent, Naomi Norman and Interim Deputy Superintendent, Cherie Vannatter, made a concerted effort to meet with each of the staffing groups within the WISD. This included: Federation Units I, II, and III; Teamsters; Non-affiliated; and Early Childhood Non-affiliated.

## High Point Reimagined

WISD continues to keep the timeline and focus on track so we can soon open our reimagined High Point School. This continued work includes impacted staff to ensure students with disabilities are adequately supported. The administration has been partnering closely with the construction manager to do everything in our power to keep the High Point construction project on schedule. Project status, successes, questions, concerns, etc. are being addressed through:

- Scheduled weekly meetings and walk-throughs of the building with the Facilities administrative team, the construction manager, and architects;
- Scheduled biweekly meetings with the broader administrative team, the construction manager, and architects; and
- Ongoing, daily communication with the Director of Operations and the construction manager.

Stakeholder meetings have been and continue to be held with supervisors, teachers, teacher assistants, related services staff, Honey Creek, Gretchen's House, etc. to ensure decisions are made in the best interest of the students and the programs. High Point and Honey Creek staff have been able to tour the partially-completed facility and have been very pleased with what they have seen so far. Planning for the staffing and custodial work for the building has also begun, including the identification of building finishes by area to determine the level of effort needed to clean the space and to determine the custodial equipment needed.

In May, WISD opened the time capsule that was hidden away in the original High Point building in 1972. The time capsule included carpet and linoleum samples (below left), the original proposal outlining the need for the school, a penny, a tax return, a newsletter, and a concept drawing (below right).



## GOAL 2:

***Cultivate and nurture an organizational culture of equity, inclusion, and social justice by leading sustained education, engagement, and action and intentionally disrupting systemic racism within WISD and our partnering schools and organizations.***

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## **EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Growing WISD's Courageous Conversations About Race Efforts**

WISD continued to focus on creating an inclusive organization and offered three sessions of the Virtual Courageous Conversations Experience, which 120 staff members and WISD partners attended. We continued our efforts to build team-level and program-level equity teams. The 70 members of the equity teams attended LEADS sessions every other month. These sessions provided more depth into the Courageous Conversations About Race protocol and supported the teams in staying focused on their goals. Lastly, a group of 16 district leaders met as the District Equity Leadership Transformation (DELT) team and had facilitated conversations using tools to focus on more racially conscious decision-making. These activities provided continued focus, even as we were navigating a pandemic, on our efforts to be racially just as an organization.

## **ENGAGEMENT**

### **Early Childhood Department's Social Justice & Inclusion Workgroup**

As part of the Early Childhood Department's commitment to the WISD's Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice goals, a Social Justice and Inclusion Workgroup was established in 2020. This workgroup has been created by department team members and includes diverse representatives from all the department's program teams. The group includes team members who have participated in Justice Leaders, Courageous Conversations, and LEADS. The workgroup purposefully examining how systemic bias and racism is at play within our early childhood systems and the real impact of system racism on the children and families participating in WISD's programs. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, the workgroup has continued to regularly meet, share, and advance its work.

### **Early Childhood Compensation Equity**

In response to initial requests from the Early Intervention home visiting team, early childhood supervisors and members of the executive administration team met to discuss compensation equity concerns raised by team members. The early childhood supervisors have worked with team members to review and update job descriptions for all early childhood nonaffiliate positions. The job descriptions have been reviewed and approved by Human Resources. In early 2021, WISD engaged Rahmberg, Stover & Associates to conduct a compensation study

this spring that included a review of early childhood non-affiliate compensation. The review included an external salary market analysis with other ISDs and Head Start grantees and an internal comparison between the home visiting staff and positions in the professional staff bargaining agreement. In addition, Rahmberg have conducted interviews with all department supervisors and early childhood non-affiliate team members. We anticipate Rahmberg’s report and recommendations early in the second half of 2021.

### **Bridging Education and the Juvenile Justice System During a Pandemic**

Our Washtenaw County Complex Team has been working in partnership with the Washtenaw County Trial Court Juvenile Administration team to support their clients with K-12 services and to problem solve barriers to ensure limited gaps in education and so no students were detained for lack of school programs. WISD has provided educational updates, as requested, and coordinated program enrollments through probation officers and court administrators, in both the adult and juvenile systems. Bridging between the court and educational systems has been critical during the pandemic to ensure equitable access to our families.

In partnership with Youth Center Juvenile Detention administration, our education team has also created new operational processes for remote learning to ensure students can continue their education engagement. We have had to problem-solve on individual cases to honor movement of staff and students in the facility due to COVID operations and mitigation planning. We hope to maintain some of the new models we have developed, as we have experienced some wonderful success for students.

### **Community Connects: Maintaining Community Among Staff**

WISD maintained monthly Community Connects through the remainder of the school year and culminated with an all-staff meeting in June. The Community Connects continued as an important chance for staff to meet and check in with each other and hear important updates from the administration. Critical updates shared during Community Connects included information about the rise in COVID cases in the spring, a video tour of High Point’s construction progress, and an introduction to the district’s long-range planning.

## **ACTION**

### **Launch of Peachjar**

In June 2020, WISD’s Communications Department launched a partnership with Peachjar, an electronic flyering service that will increase engagement opportunities for student, family, staff, and the community. The service centralizes the distribution of information for students and families, as well as provides one place for the district to share upcoming professional development and engagement opportunities for WISD and LEA staff. By creating a centralized and more efficient process for sharing opportunities, WISD’s students, families, and staff will benefit from increased visibility



A flyer shared through Peachjar alerts all WISD staff of professional development available to them from the Achievement Initiatives department.



of opportunities across departments, including and especially equity, inclusion, and social justice offerings. Lastly, Peachjar also improves the district's accessibility by streamlining ADA compliance processes for families and staff who are visually impaired.

### **Data, Infrastructure and Desktop Technology Support**

The Infrastructure and Desktop Technology Team have helped staff and students transition from remote instruction to hybrid instruction this year. Since July, the Desktop team has deployed over 132 laptops to staff, 9 iPads, 119 Chromebooks, and over 88 hotspots to students and staff who had no internet access at home, as well as teaming with the Early Childhood department to deploy approximately 75 grant-obtained iPads to students and families in need. Ongoing support was provided for a parent help desk phone line created during the 2019-20 school year for parents to contact the IT department if they experienced problems with their student's Chromebooks or hotspots. The Desktop Team has also provided training sessions and documentation for utilizing MS Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, Fax2Mail, and other services intended to aid in remote, hybrid, and face-to-face instruction. In preparation for the transition back to hybrid and face-to-face instruction, the Desktop Team ensured every site was setup to accommodate staff delivering remote instruction and that students had access to devices as required. The installation of web cameras and speakers aided instructors and students alike, equipment was "socially distanced" at programs and out centers, and equipment covers were provided to aid in the ease of routine cleaning and sanitization.



**WISD students, staff, and families relied on WISD's Technology team to continue instruction and service delivery.**

The Infrastructure team has expanded wireless coverage into the parking lots at all WISD locations so staff and families can safely access the internet without having to be inside a building. Currently, the Infrastructure team is working with local districts to increase wireless parking lot coverage so students in local districts can access wireless internet safely without building access. The Infrastructure team also has helped increase VPN access and support for staff working remotely to further limit in-person trips to the TLC for staff. The WISD Infrastructure team continues to implement security measures and practices within the WISD, by adding more staff to two-factor authentication and continuing to develop a culture focused on cyber security awareness.

The Data team has coordinated and worked with local school district staff to safely and effectively update all PowerSchool Student Information Systems over the summer remotely, with only minimal downtime at each district. In May, the Data team transitioned our PowerSchools Special Programs hosting and support from JCISD to PowerSchool. This included ensuring all data and documents were transitioned while ensuring access for the End of Year Stat Reporting. The Data team has provided support for districts through the changes to State Reporting as well as required Return to Learn Assessment submissions through the MiDataHub.

### **Washtenaw County Jail Education Services**

In partnership with the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office, WISD was able to maintain general and special education services during the pandemic. During the 2020-2021 Program Year, we served 69 students, 22 special education students, and conducted 12 IEPs. Beginning in June

of 2021, we resumed in-person classes and services. Between June 6, 2021, and July 26, 2021, we enrolled 28 students and assessed the literacy of 42 students. We are running five class cohorts a week and look forward to expanding classes in September and will welcome back our WIOA II partners for “Skills and Abilities.”

### Handle with Care

WISD continues to work with law enforcement agencies and our local districts to bring attention to students who’ve witnessed or experienced trauma. In the latter half of this school year, schools have received Handle with Care notices for 408 students. District staff informed us these notices were more important than ever because of the effect the pandemic had on staff and student connections. Although student demographic data is not tracked for Handle with Care notices, research shows that Black children are more likely than White children to be exposed to frightening or threatening experiences. The Community and School Partnerships team also sends quarterly reports to local districts of students who have received multiple Handle with Care notices.

### Mental Health Mini-Grants

Again this year, WISD received funding from the Washtenaw County Community Mental Health Millage to award mini-grants to middle and high schools who apply to support students’ mental health. Twenty (20) middle and high schools were awarded up to \$5,000 each for projects supporting students’ mental health. Projects included behavioral health screening tools, mental health kits for students, cooking and art supplies, and a new mental health library of digital and hard copy books. Schools were asked to actively engage students who do not typically participate in mental health activities.

### WISD Provides Financial Oversight of COVID Relief Funding

WISD received COVID Relief funds through the following sources:

| Source Description  | Amount    |
|---|-----------|
| Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Funding-General  | \$23,854  |
| Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Funding-Early On | \$28,202  |
| Virtual Learning Support Grant-Sec 25j (State)                | \$40,268  |
| Head Start COVID Funding                                      | \$406,888 |

The Early Childhood department coordinated the spending around the Early On and Head Start funds and worked with Finance on getting the budget established and the grant approved. GEER grant funding was coordinated in Finance and the grant has been approved, budgeted, and the funds have been spent.

WISD was recently notified that we would be receiving IDEA-related COVID Relief funds through the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Current estimates are that WISD would receive \$2,463,000 in IDEA Flowthrough funds and \$192,000 in IDEA Preschool funds. As of the writing of this year’s Year-End Board Report, expenditures will be limited to allowable costs historically permitted under IDEA, and ISDs must continue to meet the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements, which, in effect, prohibits supplanting. Administrators will be working with other ISD colleagues, MDE and our LEAs to identify allowable costs that will not create an MOE issue.

## GOAL 3:

***Advocate for policies and practices that support equity, and inclusion, and the disruption of systemic racism on the local, state, and national levels.***

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### **LOCAL ADVOCACY**

#### **LEA Technology Team Ensures YCS and LCS Operations**

The WISD LEA Technology team has been hard at work distributing nearly 6,000 student technology devices to students at the start of the 2020-21 school year. Since then, regularly scheduled device distribution for replacements and repair have occurred twice a week at each district. The total number of replacement devices since the start of school is approximately 1,050 devices combined. Since the pandemic outbreak, WISD's help ticket volume increased over 40%.

Aside from normal technology operations, the LEA Technology team has several projects in both districts underway. At Ypsilanti Community Schools, a staff laptop refresh with over 400 new staff laptops has been completed, along with a wired network infrastructure upgrade that will include every single building in the district leveraging E-Rate, and a security camera modernization project that will include West (WIMA-WIHI). In addition, the district added on several new platforms including communication tools, LMS targeting younger grade levels, and a rostering management platform to streamline access for staff and students.

For Lincoln Consolidated Schools, interactive displays are being installed to replace projectors and smart boards by integrating them into this single device for classrooms, and the district upgraded the wired network infrastructure for the high school through E-Rate. In addition, Technology assisted the districts in partnering with Eastern Michigan University and Comcast to provide Internet Essentials at home for students with over 400 families enrolled and have deployed about 200 hotspot devices to families in need for both districts.

#### **Personalized Student and Family Instruction that Honors Family and Community Context**

Individualized instruction for the students in WISD programs has continued throughout the 2020-21 school year, in spite of the challenges brought on by the pandemic. When students were able to receive in-person instruction, staff followed the student's Individual Education Plan or Individual Family Service Plan. When student instruction was presented in a virtual mode, a Contingency Learning Plan was created with the student's team members, including parents and families, to develop instructional goals and programming.

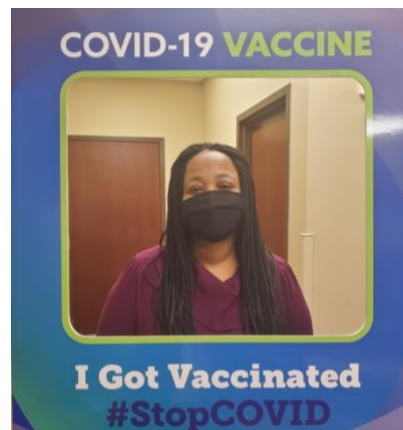
#### **Sustained Coordination with WSA to Align and Support Equitable and Inclusive Policies and Practices Related to Serving Students and Families**

Interim Deputy Superintendent Cherie Vannatter consistently convened twice weekly meetings with the superintendents of the nine local school districts. Throughout the year, the group collaborated on news releases and other communications to families throughout Washtenaw

County. The most common topics were racial equity and health and safety resources related to COVID-19.

### **Vaccination Advocacy: Supporting Vaccination Efforts for School Staff, Students, and Families Across Washtenaw**

Washtenaw ISD continued to be a key convener and partner of the Washtenaw County Health Department as additional vaccine doses became available in our community. WISD's pop-up vaccination clinic for special education teachers and teaching assistants in Phase 1A of the local vaccine rollout was WCHD's pilot test of what a pop-up site could potentially look like in our community. After this successful pilot, WISD worked with WCHD to offer vaccination to school staff over age 50 (Phase 1B) then school staff younger than 50 but serving PreK-2 children, then eventually all school staff.



WISD staff were vaccinated through partnerships with WCHD and St. Joseph Mercy Health System.

As additional vaccine doses were allocated to our community, WISD continued supporting WCHD with leveraging school partnerships and school facilities to offer additional community-based pop-up vaccine sites at schools. WISD's initial pop-up test site became the model for future pop-up vaccination clinics across the county.

## **STATE AND NATIONAL ADVOCACY**

### **Advocating for Inclusive Policies to Broaden Support for Michigan Schools**

WISD staff are part of several important statewide instructional initiatives and groups and are using their participation and influence to raise awareness of the importance of creating inclusive and equitable resources. Melissa Brooks-Yip serves on the Disciplinary Literacy Task Force, and the group worked with many scholars to revise the language in the Literacy Essentials to be more culturally relevant. The group went through many cycles of revising, clarifying and aligning within and across disciplines, as well as seeking feedback and approval from ISDs across the state before having these revisions approved in the spring.

Dr. Jennifer Banks serves on the Early Math Task Force, which has included a commitment to culturally responsive practices. Melissa Brooks-Yip has also been participating in the state Coaching Network and has been working with one of the state coaching coordinators to convene a small group of coaches from around the state to coordinate a visioning and mission process with Dr. Sealey-Ruiz and the reimagining of the work of coaches.

Interim Superintendent Naomi Norman participated in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee through the General Education Network of MAISA. This committee developed a clear purpose, body of work and recommendation for more permanent status. It was voted into a Task Force in June, and Naomi Norman is now serving on the leadership team for the newly formed DEI Task Force.



Naomi Norman also chaired the Governor's PreK-12 Literacy Commission and held weekly meetings for the group throughout the spring. This group is advocating for continued efforts to ensure literacy supports are in place for all of Michigan's children.

### **Early Childhood Advocacy**

While the pandemic initially caused considerable financial uncertainty within Michigan's economy, the subsequent recovery and new federal investments provided by the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act have provided an opportunity to advocate for expanded investments in early childhood programming. Alan Oman has led the advocacy efforts for the state ISDs' Early Childhood Administrators' Network (ECAN) and the Michigan Head Start Association. This has included ongoing communication with the Governor's Office, other state advocates, and key legislators. The result is the FY22 School Aid Act signed into law in early July which included a \$168 million expansion to the state's Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) for four-year-old preschoolers. The new funding includes a 20% increase in per student funding, putting per child GSRP funding on par with the K-12 per student allowance for the first time. The additional funding will also support expanded enrollment for 15,000 additional eligible four-year-olds.

The FY22 budget also included almost doubling Michigan's match for federal Part C of IDEA (Early On) services in Michigan. Michigan's investment to ISDs for birth to three special education services is now \$14.15 million.

### **MiConnect Advocacy and Representation for Connectivity**

As the Chairperson of METL, WISD Chief Information Officer Merri Lynn Colligan assisted in the MiConnect Taskforce to provide guidance and oversight of \$25 million dollars allocated across the state for device rebates, cybersecurity conference and training videos, and connectivity funding. Washtenaw ISD was allocated and distributed all \$442,240.20 for LEA and PSA reimbursement of purchases directly related to connectivity and remote instruction.

The MiConnect Taskforce continues to advocate for equal access and connectivity through the work with funding from the Mott Family Foundation to research on the current high-speed internet environment, minimum bandwidth requirements, challenges in obtaining connectivity, current and upcoming infrastructure funding initiatives as well as technology options. Additionally, the taskforce has held numerous discussions with potential partners and collaborators to identify the initiatives underway across the state.

### **Michigan School Business Officials**

Interim Associate Superintendent Brian Marcel worked with the Michigan School Business Officials (MSBO) to support scholarships to professional development opportunities for districts that are financially distressed and have a low socio-economic status profile.

Based on the subcommittee of two people, of which Brian Marcel is a member, the MSBO Board approved a scholarship program to MSBO's Business Manager Academy that included consideration of a district's percent of students who are economically disadvantaged, the fund balance percent relative to expenditures, and a declining enrollment trend over three years.

The subcommittee proposed expanding the scholarship offerings to the Introduction to School Business Conference, a two-day workshop to introduce new business office staff, especially Chief Financial Officers and Business Office Managers, to the world of Michigan school finance. To date, approximately \$19,000 in scholarships have been awarded to members.

## Michigan School Public Relations Association

Communications and Public Relations Specialist Ashley Kryscynski joined other board members of the Michigan School Public Relations Association (MSPRA) at the National School Public Relations Association annual conference in July 2021. MSPRA board leaders were tapped by their national association to present to other chapter leaders on building partnerships with other statewide associations such as MASA, MAISA, MASB, and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Developing strong relationships and maintaining them is critical for MSPRA, and Kryscynski's background in community organizing has supported the state association in developing its partnerships. Kryscynski was also recognized as a national "35 Under 35" awardee, which highlights young professionals making a difference for their school districts.



Ashley Kryscynski (left) and fellow Michigan colleague Andrew Munson (right) recognized as "35 Under 35" awardees.

## Early Childhood and Washtenaw County Device Project

In late 2020, WISD's Early Childhood Department received a Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Digital Divide grant from the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) and the Michigan Bureau of Community Action and Economic Opportunity for \$129,748. Beginning in January, these funds were used to purchase iPad tablets and 12-month data plans for 139 Head Start families. Early Head Start families who will be enrolled in the program for up to three years were prioritized to receive devices along with Head Start families facing homelessness or who did not have existing access to school district provided devices. The Early Childhood team was able to distribute the devices at contactless pick-up events and home deliveries thanks to exceptional support and assistance from WISD's Technology team.