Dr. K Announces Retirement

In March, Muncie Community Schools (MCS) Director of Public Education and CEO Dr. Lee Ann Kwiatkowski announced her retirement. MCS Associate Superintendent Dr. Charles (Chuck) Reynolds will succeed her when she officially leaves June 30. “I’ve been incredibly fortunate to help lead MCS while launching this unique partnership with Ball State,” she said in a press release.

“President Mearns, his team and our board of trustees have all been amazing to work with, as have the talented teachers, administrators and caring community members throughout our district. Together, we’ve taken a struggling school system and put it on a path with a very bright future, which could make it a model for other school corporations around the country.”

New Vending Machines A Novel Idea for MCS Elementary Schools

In recent years, there has been a bit of controversy over the kinds of snacks available to students in school lunches and vending machines. But we are pretty sure EVERY parent will want their child to check out what’s in the vending machine at elementary schools in Muncie!

As part of an effort to get more reading time for students, MCS is ready to launch READ20, inviting students to read 20 minutes every day. There are posters, guest readers, incentives and (you guessed it!) a vending machine that doles out great literature for students! With grant funding through the George and Frances Ball Foundation, community support and district funding, Muncie Community Schools was able to purchase the vending machines (which take tokens that students earn) and stock them with wonderful book choices for students to enjoy.

READ20 may look a bit different in each school because it is tailored to the community, student and school needs, but be on the lookout for opportunities to support these efforts in your nearby elementary school. Donations to keep the vending machines full of great children’s literature, opportunities to be a guest reader in a classroom or offering other incentives for students to spend some precious time with a good book are ways you might connect and support the efforts!
The Community Engagement Council was formed when the MCS/BSU partnership began. We asked current CEC President Bria Zolman to tell us a little more about the group.

What is the Community Engagement Council? Who makes up the council?
The Community Engagement Council was founded at the onset of the MCS/BSU partnership to act as an additional support mechanism in the revitalization of Muncie Community Schools. This volunteer group of MCS advocates is made up of various members of the community who are committed to supporting MCS’s strategic plan by contributing to district initiatives, especially surrounding community partnerships with the schools. This includes fundraising, volunteerism and partnering with the schools in maintaining a welcoming and supportive environment for teachers and families.

What is the council’s mission/goal?
Our mission statement: In support of Muncie Community Schools’ Strategic Plan, the Community Engagement Council provides support to the initiatives of the district and serves as a liaison to the community. Less formally, we want to elevate the needs of the schools to the community and community to the schools. We seek to be listeners, connectors and service-minded supporters of MCS families, teachers, and schools.

What are some of the activities the council has hosted/helped with?
Each council member acts as a liaison for an area school, and is working to build relationships in order to offer practical council support within their buildings. During our monthly council meetings, we receive information about current events and needs in the district. We hold fundraisers and provide funding to support MCS teacher and community events like the Teacher Summit and Wellness Fair. For several years we have provided Teacher Appreciation Meals in each building. We fund and administrate a Student Assistance Request form that teachers can use to support the real-time needs of students in their building, so that they are spending less money out of pocket on barriers to access for vulnerable students.

What are some council activities we should look forward to?
You will be seeing Community Engagement Council members at the upcoming Teacher Appreciation Event on May 15th at Minnetrista. We are working on ways to elevate the needs and voices of all MCS stakeholders when we are present at school and community events! This fall we will be launching our first Cornhole Tournament fundraiser. We hope to have some fun and exciting ways for staff and families to share their love of MCS through this community event to benefit the schools.

We are eager to add service-minded volunteers to our council! If you have interest in joining the Community Engagement Council, please email us at CEC@muncieschools.org to express your interest! We will reach out with an interest form for you to submit.
MEET PDS LIAISON SCOTT DUEKER

In his first year as PDS Liaison at East Washington Academy, Scott Dueker is working in his sixth year as an assistant professor in the Department of Special Education and Applied Behavior Analysis at Ball State. He loves teaching courses in math instruction for pre-service teachers in particular because of the hands-on approach he takes.

“It is fun to see them making connections that their future students will make!”

Scott also teaches Applied Behavior Analysis for graduate students and Response to Intervention/MTSS and Behaviorology at the graduate level as well.

He puts all that knowledge into good use in working with the teaching staff and administration at EWA as he works with the MTSS team- finding ways to improve student outcomes. He and the behavior team are currently working on a project to improve classroom-ready skills for kindergarten students. Last fall, they identified several missing skills across all classrooms that are affecting learning and are working with classroom teachers to implement some activity-based instruction at the end of the day to help teach them.

When he isn’t teaching, Dr. Dueker likes home improvement projects around his house in Pendleton, traveling with his wife, visiting museums, and being with their two adopted dogs, Elley and Champ. He has collections of vintage video games, antique cameras, and he’ll be happy to show you his extensive Star Wars memorabilia collection. May the Force be with him!

WHAT IS A PDS LIAISON?

PDS, or Professional Development Schools, are collaborative planning partnerships between professional education programs at Ball State and P-12 schools for the professional development of teachers and the training of future educators. They work with a dedicated BSU faculty liaison who collaborates on field experiences within the school, provides site-specific professional development and leads school-based research tied to school improvement documents.

We want to hear from you! Send us information about the projects you are working on, the cool partnership stories we should know about, even photos of activities and events.

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The public is invited to the first State of the Schools Community Meeting at 7 p.m. May 8 at Southside Middle School.

Speakers will include Dr. Lee Ann Kwiatkowski, MCS Director of Public Education and CEO; Jim Williams, MCS Board President, and Geoffrey Mearns, Ball State University President.

Each will offer updates on the partnership over the last year, and discuss plans for its future.