



September 20, 2020—Issue 7

The Grizzlies Gazette



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Office of the Superintendent



Welcome Back Again, Grizzly Nation! As we begin to settle into our “new normal,” I am implored to continue to reiterate my gratitude and recognize each of your tremendous accomplishments! Our 20-21 opening of the year was OUTSTANDING! I have taken pride in telling everyone who would listen about our exceptional YCS staff! You indeed “Showed Up and Showed Out!” You provided input on EVERY

plan that MDE and the Governor required of us, you planned socially distanced transportation routes, you planned and delivered food for those students in person AND remote (hot and cold options to boot!), you prepared signage and billboards, you prepared our buildings by cleaning, disinfecting (there is a difference) and placing appropriate signage throughout each of our facilities, you prepared our grounds, you planned and assisted in the development of lessons, communicated to families (in MULTIPLE languages), you provided technological support, you registered families, you answered questions, you checked in with students and MORE! WHEW! AND you did it with a smile, grace, and love. THAT is why I can’t stop thanking you for all you have done.

I appreciate you and know that this is only the beginning. How one starts is often how we finish. Therefore, although I am very aware that we will have our challenges this year, I believe that it is essential to pause and reflect on the positives and the things we were actually able to accomplish.

As we progress through this year, expect to receive frequent communication through your building administrators and directors, during your staff meetings, and through district newsletters. It is essential to check your district emails twice a day. You will be responsible for information that will be provided to you in the emails. We are happy to provide you with any support you may need in logging in, yet, as professionals, it is your responsibility to stay informed by reading your emails often.

The district is working to keep our families informed as well. We are planning another Town Hall on Monday, September 28th, at 6 pm. We will provide an update on athletics, the learning options, food services, and more. We invite you to join us at the Town Hall by Zoom as well. Please watch for a flyer from Taryn.

Lastly, I want to remind you that although we are concerned about our students, staff, and families’ overall health and safety, our business is education. Even amid this pandemic, it is imperative that we must provide the best education possible to each of our students. We understand that every student might not be learning in their optimal learning environment. However, we must do our best to work to provide our students with our very best. I believe in you! I know that you have precisely what it takes to provide our students what is needed. They only have this year to learn what is necessary for their current grade level. I know that you were called to do this tremendous work and you’ve GOT THIS! There will be many challenging days ahead and know that we are all here to provide you with the necessary support. When in doubt, remember, we are “Stronger Together,” and that we will not only survive this year, we will STRIVE this year on behalf of each and every one of our fabulous YCS students!

Alena Zachery-Ross — Superintendent of Schools

Student Support Services

It is absolutely wonderful to see our students again! Whether online or in person, it is so good to see them.

Our new year has started with enthusiasm and new opportunities to support our students and their families. We will be implementing new procedures for our students who have IEPs to ensure that they are receiving the services and programs that they need to be successful.

We are excited about new staff who have joined us. We welcome Ms. Cindy Lonick, who is our new Behavior Coach (BCBA) who will help with our students with autism and who will work closely with the technical staff from the ISD to support our students.

We welcome all of these new opportunities to challenge our students to be the best that they can be!

Department wishes you and your families a healthy, safe, enjoyable and relaxing summer

E. Ruth Jordan — Student Support Services Director





Human Resources

School is OPEN!! We did it! Week one is under our belt and was a great success for all three options; in-person, remote and on-line. I had the pleasure of being at both the elementary and secondary buildings for in-person opening day. It was a wonderful rainy day! The staff and students were so positive and happy. I enjoyed helping students to class and more importantly seeing staff at their very best. I would have been walking in circles without

them. *We have the best team!*

Payroll \$\$- Please remember to get your timesheets into Judi Wills by the due date indicated on the [payroll calendar](#). It is the second column from the right of the linked document. Your building administrator or department director will be able to assist you with the process. Human Resources and the Business Office will be sending out an email with written directions along with a graphic presentation to assist everyone. Basically, we will submit timesheets using the same timelines as last year, but with an electronic process tied in for remote and online hourly staff. An official communication will be sent out the week of September 14, 2020.

District provided professional development (**DPPD**) is very different this year. It is important that we all sign in and sign out using the links provided in the chat box during each event. It is crucial that you sign in and out only once to allow for accurate data that will be uploaded to the Michigan Online Educator Certification System (**MOECS**). If you need assistance with this process please email your questions or concerns to the Technology Department at techsupport@ycschools.us.

Safe Schools Modules - Thank you to all staff members who have successfully completed the modules. I am so happy to say that we were able to release the modules in late July again this year. Many of you were able to take advantage of this early release. There were two half days allowed this year for completion of the modules on August 25 and 26, 2020. Please complete any remaining [safe schools modules](#) immediately. The modules were due on September 2, 2020 and are mandatory. Human Resources will contact staff members individually to troubleshoot any issues.

On September 2, 2020 the District provided the **Title IX** mandatory training for all staff. This training is required for any person who is hired and compensated by the District. A link to the slide show is [here](#) and will be located on the YCS Webpage under the Human Resources Intranet site. The link for the Web site is located [here](#). If you have any questions regarding Title IX, please contact our Coordinator, Dr. Carlos Lopez at clopez2@ycschools.us.

COVID-19 has most certainly had an impact globally, but in YCS it has brought out hidden talents and strengths of our tremendous staff. Go Grizzly Nation!!



"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit."
—Aristotle

Sue McCarty — Human Resources Director

We are going to have free COVID-19 testing again this weekend and next weekend with the support of the State of Michigan and the Michigan National Guard.

Saturday, September 19th, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., in the Washtenaw County Human Services (health department/CMH/ DHHS) parking lot (enter Center St. off Michigan Avenue).

Saturday, September 26th, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Whittaker Road branch of the Ypsilanti District Library, 5577 Whittaker Road,

These sites are OPEN TO ALL, whether or not you have insurance or a specific exposure to COVID, whether or not you have symptoms. EVERYBODY is welcome, and that includes children (we will need parental consent).

We will take drive-ups/walk-ups, but it helps us A LOT if you register in advance. Sign up here: <http://bit.ly/WCHDfreetests>



Aristotle: *"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."*



GRANTS AVAILABLE FUNDS FREE GOVERNMENT BUSINESS Grants

While the appearance of 'school' has changed...what won't change is what educators (administrators, principals, teachers, para pros, bus drivers, custodians, secretaries, food service friends, and anyone else that I missed, yes we all are educators) will do to make certain our children are Safe, Respected, Loved, and Educated. Because we are educators and that is what we do. Thank you to ALL of the educators for making a real positive difference for all of our children.

We have or will be applying for the following grants.

- **Washtenaw County Community and Economic Development: CARES**
 - Amount \$40,000 for mobile food distribution to YCS families
- **Equity Grant**
 - Amount \$363,000 for technology and Social Emotional supports
- **GEER Grant**
 - Amount \$328,000 for technology and mental health supports
- And more to come!

If you know of a grant or opportunity for funding please let me know. I am more than happy to write, assist, or support the work.

If you would like to apply for a grant or would like to start a "CrowdFunding Source" like Go Fund Me, please let me know. I am happy to assist you. I can make sure that you are following school board policies about these resources.

When a need arises please let me know as well. There may be grant opportunities for us to consider.

Please feel free to reach out to me at any time if I can be of assistance.

Mark Coscarella — Director of State and Federal Grant Programs

Statewide Field Team (SWFT): Blueprint Installation

It was a pleasure to engage in learning with many of you during your Professional Learning Days. The learning facilitated on August 26, 2020 was directly connected to ensuring we have a strong Instructional Infrastructure and to our YCS Priority Goal #1: To substantially improve the quality of teaching and learning and thereby significantly advance the learning for all YCS students.

Building a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum: Building the Why.

We hope that each of you walked away from that learning with a better understanding of the rationale and components of a Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum. Additionally, it was our intention to bring your attention to essential standards both their importance and how we might identify them. Finally, we asked you to make connections between a Guaranteed & Viable Curriculum and how it drives the work of teacher teams. We left you with the following to consider before we come together next time:

1. Are all students learning the same content regardless of teacher or school?
2. Are all students assessed using the same criteria for proficiency?
3. Are all students provided with extra time to learn and demonstrate proficiency in essential standards?
4. Are all students given opportunities for extended learning when they have demonstrated proficiency inside of essential learning targets?
5. Is this the work/focus of our teams?

Statewide Field Team offers 5 interactive online courses (at no charge to YCS staff) and SCECHs are available. The fall term is October 7 - December 2, 2020. The following courses are recommended:

- Educational Improvement Through Systems * NEW
- Teacher Collaborative Routines * NEW
- Changing Minds to Address Poverty in the Classroom
- Collaborative Learning Cycle

Register here: <https://blueprinttoolsandresources.com/events-listing/>
Please connect with me via email if you have any questions.

Sarah Scott, — SWFT Coordinator of Professional Learning
(Ypsilanti Community Schools)
scotts@calhounisd.org



SAVING LIVES



Data

Programs In Progress Updates: Programs In Progress Updates:

- **PowerSchool** - Each building secretary is responsible for maintaining their building student information. This includes changes in scheduling, enrollment, course drops,

and transfers.

- **HMH Anywhere**

- Students will be rostered by Tuesday, September 14, 2020.
- Access will be available for all teachers by Tuesday, September 15, 2020.
- [Click here to login!](#)
- Professional Learning Opportunities for Teachers - [Link](#)

- **Pear Deck** - is deployed! You can add it directly to your Clever portal.

Clever - We are currently in the implementation stage and ensuring good data is being sent to Clever. I am working on connecting as many vendor platforms to be rostered by Clever. Clever will be able to provide analytics via Chromebook, Windows, and Macs. No insight via iPads and/or other mobile devices. The Family Portal is coming and I am setting up the platform to be able to leverage this system. I am more than happy to help train staff on how to use the portal. If interested please listen to the Holmes Clever Presentation on Friday Sept. 11. [Holmes Clever Presentation](#) (password: yh=idv7h)[Click here to log into your Clever account.](#)

- **Remind** - In progress. Coming soon. We will keep you posted.
- **Everyday Math** - Ready to go! Please access through your Clever portal!
- **Imagine Reading** - Completed. Ready to use.
- **Imagine Math** - Completed - Ready to use.

Attendance

After speaking with Tami (our pupil accountant) here are some clarifications after the first week.

- **Attendance on Friday:** Friday attendance will be restored by the end of this weekend. For any teachers who could not input attendance from Friday please have them go back to Friday to input attendance.
- **Weekly Attendance Review:** There is a weekly attendance report that teachers should be reviewing each week. I will coordinate with the secretaries at each building to ensure those reports are sent out to teachers. Please remind teachers that aside from students who have not yet appeared for their first day, all students are to be present or absent.

Here is the updated [guidelines document](#).

Solomon Zheng — Data Coach

Transportation

Welcome Back! While things will likely be forever changed by this pandemic-it has been so great to see so many of you and getting back to our business of transporting students safely-READY TO LEARN!



Random fact 71% of the transportation department live either in the 48198 or 48197 zip code. We also welcome the many other zip codes that work here in YCS. Those other zips include: Belleville, Westland, Canton, Romulus, Whitaker, Milan, Eastpointe, Willis and Detroit.

Thank you to the Men and Women keeping their buses clean and sanitized. Transportation Staff have been very cooperative signing in the health questionnaire and keeping face masks on.

Together we are stronger, saving lives.

Kim Searcy — Director of Transportation

I am YCS, YOU are YCS, WE ARE YCS!!!



SAVING LIVES



Technology

Tech Support - We continue to see a large volume of tech support requests, please continue to use the ticket system (helps us track issues and prioritize our requests), or if you are unable to use the [ticketing system](#), please use techsupport@ycschools.us. Please do not send tech help requests to techdirector@ycschools.us; this email is primarily used for mass communications only.

Device shortage - We have ordered several student devices to provide for our students in the district but there are expected delays. We have received a large amount of devices back that were either damaged or have manufacturing issues. Please let our families know that we will replace them as soon as our orders come in.

Online Directory - *We are working on safely publishing an online directory that will consolidate information and navigation of the district's online courses for our families. The intent for this directory is a way for our families to easily navigate and find the online courses for their students. We hope to have this published early next week on the website.*

Wireless - We are working on a solution to allow for personal devices to access our network. Please keep in mind that if you use a personal device on a school network which is considered public domain, your device could be subject to a state audit under the Freedom of Information Act. Another consideration is that we content filter all network traffic; so your device would be subject to the same requirement meaning you'd have to load a certificate on your personal device to access our network. And last, if this plan is approved by the district leadership, we cannot provide any technical support for your personal device. I'll release more information once we know our solution is viable and accessible. More to follow in the coming weeks, we just ask for a little patience.

Nik Jackson — Technology Director

Facilities

Welcome Back Staff! The YCS Facilities Department is committed to the health and safety of our students and staff and the greater Grizzly Community. Our team has been hard at work preparing our facilities for a safe return to school. The [YCS Pandemic Response Cleaning Protocol](#) linked here is based on the [CDC recommendations](#) and the [MI Safe Schools: Michigan's 2020-2021 Return to School Road Map](#).



All classrooms have been furnished to support social distancing for the instructional day. Only essential furniture was placed in classrooms, socially distanced and all faced in the same direction. Staff have been afforded Ready To Use (RTU) disinfectant wipes for the purpose of disinfecting their personal work space, desk and other personal belongings. The RTU wipes do not require gloves or other PPE for use. However, gloves, masks and face shields are available upon request. Masks must be worn by all students and staff at all times while inside our YCS facilities.

Covid-19 signage was also placed throughout each of our face to face buildings. This signage is intended to communicate expectations set for entry into the facility, as well as reminders throughout the building regarding facial coverings, social distancing and good hygiene. Hand washing directions and reminders were installed at sinks and in bathrooms. All classrooms have numbered circles at the perimeter of the classroom to support line formation and social distancing during lunch time custodial services. At Estabrook, social distancing dots with directional arrows were placed in the hallways to educate and scaffold social distancing and movement throughout the building for our younger students.

We welcome you back to school whether you are supporting face to face instruction, remote learning or virtual learning. Your dedication to our students and our community is felt each day you serve. Thank you for all you do and please reach out to our department with any requests you may have related to your safety and comfort and the safety and comfort of others. Our [maintenance ticket system](#) is linked here. For immediate assistance, our office number is 734-221-1190 or reach out to your building administrator(s).

A friendly reminder, our custodial team will be cleaning for safety and hygiene, not for appearance. Please understand that our priority is the health and safety of those we serve. We thank you in advance for your continued support of YCS and go Grizzlies!

Aaron Rose — Director of District Operations



Reading opens the door to unlimited knowledge!

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Communications Department

WELCOME BACK!

A few friendly reminders:

Ypsilanti Community Schools and the Ann Arbor Pharmacy are hosting a FREE Flu Clinic event on Saturday, October 10th, for students, families, and community members. Flu shots are covered by insurance plans, Medicare, and Medicaid with a possible co-pay. For those who are uninsured, the shots will be \$25 each. We will also have a limited number of immunizations available for students who need updated immunizations.

The community event will also have food distribution and curriculum packet pick-up for students. Eventbrite REGISTRATION is required for the community event on October 10th.

We are also hosting three clinics for current YCS students and teachers attending in-person classes on September 29th and 30th plus October 1st.

[Click here to see the flyer for complete details!](#)

Ypsi Can I Share is hosting a [YCS/AAPS School Board forum](#) for the candidates to speak to the community about their platform. There are three people running for YCS school board and will be on the panel.

Taryn Willis — Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Food Service

Welcome Back

The first week of school has been exciting as we adapt to serving meals in person and at our distribution sites. We are distributing meals at ACCE, Erickson, Holmes, Perry at YCHS. All sites are free for any child under the age of 18 or under 26 with special needs.

GREAT NEWS!!!! We have tentatively been awarded the Michigan Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Grant in the amount of \$76,450. An official announcement has not been made, but we are excited to be able to offer our students a wider variety of fruits and vegetables. Please stay tuned for more information.

Thank you to all of the foodservice department staff, who has continued to provide meals to our students since March when schools were closed. They have worked tirelessly to continue to provide for our YCS Community.

We Are Stronger Together, We Are YCS



Tiffany Houston — Director of Food Services



Business Office

Let today be the start of something new

Welcome Back!!

Hope everyone had a well deserved, restful and rejuvenating break.

State of Michigan has finalized their budget for the 2019-2020 school year. In our August State aid payment, we saw the shortfall of \$175/pupil cut that was agreed upon in the Revenue Consensus meeting that was held in summer.

As we get more information on the current school year finances, we will present it during the board meetings and will always keep you updated with the most current information. We are stronger together and be assured that we will get through this together.

Please reach out to the Business Office if you need any support regarding Payroll, Purchase Orders, Invoices, etc.. to make this a successful school year. We are here to support you to make this a remarkable year.

The Business Office is currently working on the annual audit for the completion of 2019-2020 school year.

Stronger Together.

Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one thing.. Abraham Lincoln.

Priya Nayak — Director of Business and Finance





Office of the Assistant Superintendent Continued

Assessment - [Presentation Link](#) (There is a lot in this presentation--I'd recommend re-viewing it)

- Requires ECOL for the year - end goal for district
- Goals must include assessment that is aligned with state standards and administered to all students K-8
- Proficiency or growth on Reading and Math, Pre (first 9 weeks) and post
- MDE assessment providers (4 have been chosen)
- Internet provided, CAD
- Immediate feedback, nationally normed, multiple measures of growth, etc.
- Approval of providers, not specific assessment
- RTL - one benchmark provided at no cost - Smarter Balanced through DRC, ELA and Math grades 3-8, see Aug 27 Spotlight, more information coming from DRC
- One or more "benchmark assessment that provides prog monitoring and enhanced diagnostics
- Private schools do not receive state aid and therefore should not be held to this legislation, however a definitive answer will be coming soon.
- Local benchmark assessments are exempt from aggregate reporting but have **different reporting obligations**
- Provide to parents within 30 days after test admin
- Attempt to deliver assessments that have been previously used (longitudinal data)
- Determine loss of learning due to pandemic

Accountability - Accountability [Presentation Link](#)

- Worried about lack of data and what this means for students, federal accountability expectations were waived for 19-20 school year, no identification of schools, including exiting schools, AER is still required excluding assessment and accountability - civil rights, teacher qualifications and per pupil expenditures still required (MDE will complete all reporting, schools just need cover letters), timeline will be shared in the coming weeks, after Mischooldata redesign is fully launched. Likely later in the Fall
- Still hoping that legislature will waive A-F grading system that had been planned for this year.
- Preview in late October available
- No index based on 19-20 data.
- Should not expect a waiver on assessments from Feds, so 20-21 index will be run in late Fall/early Winter of 21-22
- Participation is not tied to WIDA in A-F system, and will not be run for 19-20 in index, but will be run for 20-21 including 95% participation rate
- Absenteeism will be run through March 13th of 2020, but not beyond for 19-20 calculation
- Parent dashboard is being updated with non-assessment data

MTSS - [PowerPoint](#) and [MitSS information](#)

- 3 categories
- **Universal** - connected to larger district efforts
- **Targeted** - based on needs common to multiple recipients and not individualized (includes a letter of agreement)
- **Intensive** - services in-person/virtually and includes TA Center and locals. (includes a letter of agreement)
- Link to website and access the Catalog: <https://mimtsstac.org/> Join listserv at info@mimtss.org

'Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.' –Benjamin Franklin



SAVING LIVES



Office of the Assistant Superintendent Continued

Updates to the General Education Leadership Network (GELN):

- Last Thursday the MDE team met with GELN and the school improvement network. I wanted to share the information and links to the materials and powerpoints in case you are wondering about any of these MDE initiatives.

Literacy -

- 3rd Grade Retention - in effect unless we don't test with MSTEP. MDE is re-requesting a waiver for statewide summative assessments. [MDE Response to Federal Waiver Denial](#)
- RBG3 law is still intact this year
- 4th grade still required to do IRIPs
- [MDE Return to Learn Webinars](#) - FAQ coming after all sessions are complete
- Competitive grant from USDOE - 5 districts to develop Literacy plans for K-12, \$16 million over 5 years, webinar later this Fall
- Communicate with vendors about how to maintain reliability and validity in an alternate environment

Special Populations -

- ELs - Entrance and Exit criteria changes, alternate entrance guidance for online students, auto exit is now in place and active. (3-12 is 4.8, K-2 is 4.8 or higher) K-2 will still need auto exit. Enough students tested last Spring to initiate auto exit, date of 6/30.
- Webinar and other materials for this protocol are available on MDE EL website. Local reading assessment is removed from entrance criteria. K assessment is still lengthy - listening and speaking, later writing - still 2 phase. K screener will be implemented Fall of '21.
- Temporary guidance is available for ID of ELs online, if in person is available then these guidelines are not applicable. HLS, Phone interview with family, document and begin services if appropriate, ID in MSDS

African American Student Initiative/Equity - [Presentation Link](#)

- Phase 1 - Free for schools that are CSI, ATI, ACS. The cost is \$100.00 for five online sessions, 2 Cohorts Fall and February
- Phase 2 - Spring and Fall, going deeper to institutionalized inequity
- Training at all levels from Supt'd Rice to support staff for implicit biases

MICIP - [MICIP Mindset](#) Presentation - adding Equity

- Request for data set templates from the field ([see folder from today's resources](#)). An additional tool to assess readiness to be on board with data sharing and connectivity to HUB
- "MICIP will be ready when you are" - limited launch on October 5 with existing testing partners
- Statewide rollout Jan 4, integrations with CTE and SE will follow
- Deadlines for changes in ASSIST to be ported over to MICIP is passed. You can manually save from ASSIST through September.
- Process and platform guides are in development, as well as a sample plan. Training opportunities for CIFN and GELN on Oct 7 and 16, afternoon of 16th will be a technical training that will be recorded and released after CI Conference on the 20th. All presentations will be available for 30 days after the conference.
- Disregard any messages from ASSIST indicating "your plan is late"

Hope that these updates are helpful to each of you.

Carlos Lopez — Office of the Assistant Superintendent

**We will continue to keep you informed of
developments in our departments.
Please watch your email for the next issue.**

Teaching
saves lives.



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