



# news from the board

*Summary of information from the August 16, 2010, MAISD Board Meeting*



## **2010-11 MAISD Board Members**

Donna J. Fiebelkorn, Ed.D., , President

Dwight Vines, Vice President

Barbara L. DeBruyn, Secretary

William Loxterman, Treasurer

Edward Garner, Trustee

## **report raises important issues, sparks discussion**

The recent study commissioned by Booth newspapers and conducted by MSU Professor Sharif Shakrani on school district consolidation makes valid points about cost savings associated with consolidation of districts and services. Of course we are all wowed by the astonishing savings suggested by the study; savings of \$612 million dollars a year has great appeal. The news coverage has sparked considerable discussion among parents, educators, and the community about the benefits and drawbacks of such consolidation. These are important conversations to have.

Between 1950 and 1970, school district consolidation eliminated 4,280 distinct school districts, so the concept is not a new one to our state. Since then the pace has slowed considerably with about ninety consolidations taking place. In the last ten years there have been a number of research studies that looked at the impact of school district consolidation. In addition to cost savings, these studies considered such topics as transition costs; the ideal district size; community involvement and identity; length of bus rides and the impact on young children. The impact of district consolidation on student learning is an important avenue for inquiry also.

When entering into any discussion of school consolidation, it would be important to identify what voters consider advantages and disadvantages of district consolidation. The educational delivery structure in our state is based in law. District consolidation can only be changed by a vote of the people residing in the districts, not by school administrators or even school boards; so it is crucial that we are educated on the many pieces involved in district consolidation.

In the area of service consolidation, there are endless possibilities to explore together. I am very proud of the progress and success we have experienced in this area. The collaborative nature of all local districts allows us to find creative ways to save money as we realize even better services at lower costs.

Susan W. Meston, Ph.D.  
MAISD Superintendent

## **Booth Newspaper Article Series on Consolidation:**

[http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2010/08/michigan\\_schools\\_education\\_fun.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2010/08/michigan_schools_education_fun.html)

## **isd provides support for high priority schools**

Pam Varga [School Improvement, Response to Intervention (RtI), High Priority Schools Consultant] updated the board on the support the MAISD provides for schools identified as “high priority” by the Michigan Department of Education. High Priority Schools are those that have not made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in academics (based on state assessments) for two or more years and are eligible for and receiving Title I funds. In 2004-05 there were 10 high priority schools in Muskegon County, in 2009 there were three, and today there are two plus one high needs school eligible for a much larger School Improvement Grant. The MAISD receives grant funding to assist these schools in meeting the legal requirements for data coaching, instructional coaching, developing and implementing school improvement processes, process mentoring for school staff, and selecting and supporting the use of interventions. The MAISD coordinates the delivery of high quality professional development to HPS schools, as well as those that have not made AYP for one year. Workshops are offered on a variety of topics including writing and reading, RtI, co-teaching (special ed and general ed), thinking maps, and data analysis.

## **data services meet school needs throughout state**

For the past 35 years the MAISD has delivered the highest quality data services while being one of the lowest priced technology service providers in the state. Today over 40 school customers in 13 counties subscribe to MAISD data services that include accounting, payroll/human resources, and student records management. The most recent interest in data services has been driven by two recent upgrades to the financial management software and a student records management software.

Two years ago the MAISD and local districts selected the Tyler MUNIS financial software system because it proved to be more efficient with modules for financials, revenues, payroll, and human resources. Many districts were eager to collaborate with the MAISD to purchase MUNIS. Because of the resulting economy of scale, the cost for the new system—including licenses, installation, and training—was negotiated down from \$1.838 million for 3 years to \$882,052 for the same time period. Since this purchase the MAISD has added 15 more districts as MUNIS customers, bringing the total number of students served to over 70,000. We anticipate that up to seven more districts will join the collaborative by January 2011.

In 2009, the MAISD and local districts selected the Pinnacle Student Information System (SIS) to manage student data. With this cutting-edge software teachers will be able to use standards-aligned data to inform instruction and improve student achievement. Pinnacle SIS will house records for over 15 school districts by 2011-12. Support for Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) and other state reporting requirements is available as part of the Pinnacle package as well. Implementation is well underway.

*“Our decision to access this software through the Muskegon Area ISD consortium allowed us to save 50% of the five-year cost, compared to the cost for us to purchase and host it ourselves.”*

—Stan Kogut, Ingham ISD Superintendent

## parents join committee

The MAISD board approved the appointment of **Stacey Burns**, representing North Muskegon Public Schools, and **Laura Peterson**, representing Ravenna Public Schools, to the MAISD Special Education Parent Advisory Committee membership for 2010-12. PAC is authorized under Michigan Special Education Rules. Its purpose is to provide a formal mechanism for parent input to the ISD Plan for Delivery of Special Education Programs and Services.

## head start seeks funds

The board approved the submission of a grant application to fund **Head Start of Muskegon/Oceana** for the budget period December 1, 2010, through November 30, 2011. The grant includes basic operational funding (not ARRA/stimulus fund) to serve 924 children and families and funding specified for Training and Technical Assistance. All Head Start grants require a 25 percent local match. The source of the majority of the match will be in the form of in-kind services from volunteers for the program and the value of classroom space donated by the school districts. Federal Head Start standards require that the grantee governing board approve all applications before their submission to the regional office.

The board approved a request to the **Chicago Regional Head Start Office** for a **partial waiver** of the non-federal share for the ARRA Early Head Start grant ending September 29, 2010. Partial waivers are being offered because of the quick start-up period, and the significant increase in non-federal share amounts required due to the enhanced ARRA funding this past year.

## advisory group to form

The board recommended the approval of the criteria for membership on the **Wesley School Sex Education Advisory Committee**. Wesley School is preparing for the implementation of a sex education curriculum. The staff have received professional development about sex education instruction. To move to the next step, the Michigan School Code requires school districts to have a Sex Education Advisory Committee and requires the Board of Education to approve the composition of that advisory committee. Based on the Michigan School Code, the committee will consist of a local clergy, a local health professional, a Wesley teacher, a Wesley student, the Wesley Sex Education Supervisor, Wesley parents and the Wesley Principal.

## contracts renewed

The board approved the renewal of two contracts with **Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)** effective October 1, 2010, to September 30, 2011, for supported employment and for those students who do not qualify for supported employment. These cash match agreements are with Community Mental Health, MAISD, and the Michigan Department of Career Development - Rehabilitation Services, Muskegon District Office.

The board approved a contract renewal with **Pioneer Resources** for specialized **prevocational and vocational training** programs for the 2010-11 school year. Wesley School students participating in the programs train in the Pioneer Resources kitchen for 2 ½ - 3 hours daily. Training activities include food preparation, food service, and kitchen clean-up.

The board approved a contract renewal with **Goodwill Industries of West Michigan, Inc.** for a work skills development program for the 2010-11 school year. Wesley School students who are near the completion of their school careers participate in the training and may continue at Goodwill upon leaving school.

## wings drew crowd

Enrollment in this year's WINGS (Widening Interests through New experiences for Gifted Students) program was at its highest in five years! 430 students took 750 classes and 35 teachers offered 43 different classes multiple times, for a total of 67 class offerings. Lego Robotics, Hip Hop Jazz, Write 4 Books in 4 Days, Volcanoes, and Vegetable Art Fair are just a few of the exciting, thought-provoking choices students made. Coordinated by Rochelle Sartorius, Arts & Select Projects Specialist, the WINGS program was able to offer 95 student scholarships to those in financial need.

## winners

The Muskegon Area Career Tech Center **Early Childhood Development class** was the only Michigan team to bring home medals from the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) National Leadership conference in Chicago: Nicole Venroy (Ravenna) won a gold medal for a research study on autism using information gained during her internship at Wesley School; Tricia Delore (Muskegon Catholic Central) won a silver medal for an entrepreneurship project; and Jessica Rake (Mona Shores) won a bronze medal for her service project. Miss Rake organized a group of volunteers who made blankets for Muskegon County's Child Haven.

---

**news from the board** is a monthly publication of the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD). Its purpose is to provide a monthly summary of board action and highlight other helpful information.

The MAISD operates:

- Head Start of Muskegon/Oceana
- Muskegon Area Career Tech Center
- MAISD Regional Mathematics & Science Center
- Wesley School
- Educational Services Center

630 Harvey Street, Muskegon, MI 49442, (231) 777-2637

Visit us online at [www.muskegonisd.org](http://www.muskegonisd.org) and [www.twitter.com/maisd](https://www.twitter.com/maisd)

E-mail: [ktank@muskegonisd.org](mailto:ktank@muskegonisd.org)