



MAISD News

a quarterly publication of the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District

September 2009



IN THIS ISSUE

- On the Cover
- SB-CEU Information
- Doing More with Less
- Online PD Registration
- Tech Leadership Academy
- Community Support at Wesley
- H1N1 Pandemic Flu Information
- Literacy Success for All Students
- Back on Track: Ready for Algebra!*
- Early On and Project Find Services
- Career Tech Center Program Offerings
- Challenging Home-School Partnerships
- Bridges 2009 - Networking Event for Parents
- Middle School Students Flock to Summer Fun
- MP3 Player Kits Added to MAISD Lending Library
- Training Scheduled for Parents of Struggling Readers and Writers



Doing More With Less

A letter from the MAISD Superintendent, Susan W. Meston, Ph.D.

If you are an educator, you may be one of over 1,000 people who attend high-quality, low-cost workshops offered by the MAISD each year. Maybe you have worked one-on-one with our instructional or special education consulting staff on curriculum development or school improvement. Perhaps your students have attended our countywide programs that focus on careers, math, science, art, music, and advanced and accelerated learning. Even with these experiences, you may be surprised to know the number of other ways ISDs help local schools.

ISDs were created by state lawmakers in 1962 to help schools become more cost-effective and reduce duplication. The MAISD helps schools realize lower prices by cooperatively purchasing everything from hand soap to laptops. We provide technology services needed to manage data for report cards, employee records, pay checks and deposit slips. In times of dwindling resources, local school districts are required to do more with less. Intermediate school districts assist in this process.

Many cost-saving projects would not be possible without community and school-ISD partnerships. In 2007, Muskegon County, Muskegon Central Dispatch 9-1-1, and the MAISD completed a 130-mile fiber optic network that connects schools, colleges, fire departments, police stations, and other governmental entities. The countywide network delivers faster online connections, increased capacity, and lower telecommunications costs for all sites.

Because ISDs are regional, they are successful in bringing new grant dollars into local schools and communities. While a third of the ISD's revenues come from local property taxes, the rest is generated from outside sources including federal and state grants. Each year a federal Head Start grant provides free preschool programs to 924 children in Muskegon and Oceana counties.

Grants also fund training to help teachers learn new ways to teach history, science and mathematics, career preparation, reading, and writing. Grants, paired with private and corporate donations, have

funded a program to supply expensive high-tech laboratory equipment that rotates through our local district high school science labs. The MAISD Regional Mathematics and Science Center that serves all Muskegon and Newaygo county K-12 students provides the necessary training and staff for this program and many others.

Schools are also served by ISDs through regional facilities. Students with the most severe cognitive and/or physical impairments receive highly specialized services and support through Wesley School. These services are mandated by state and federal laws. A daily living program allows older students to learn and practice critical skills like working, shopping, and cooking. This helps them become independent adults. The ISD serves as the fiscal agent for these students to obtain supportive employment services from the Michigan Department of Career Development.

A second ISD regional facility is the Muskegon Area Career Tech Center (MACTC). Nearly 800 high school juniors and seniors from 16 public and non-public high schools attend the MACTC. They are taught by expert staff using costly technical equipment similar to that found in today's work place. This equipment is not affordable on an individual district basis. Nearly 70 percent of all MACTC students continue their education after high school. Employers often seek out and hire our students for their skills and experience.

Throughout the past 47 years public schools and the ISDs that support them have pulled together to do more with less. Today's economic challenges make us even more passionate about helping our schools, and ultimately our children, succeed.



Susan W. Meston, Ph.D.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Meston". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.



On The Cover

A middle school student learns about welding at the Muskegon Area Career Tech Center's Summer Fun program. For more information, please see the Summer Fun article in this issue.

BRIDGES 2009

Networking Event Will Connect Parents and Caregivers to Resources Designed to Support their Children with Special Needs



Submitted by Carolyn Smith-Gerdes,
Assistant Director of Special Education
231-767-7249 or csgerdes@muskegonisd.org

Bridges 2009 is a resource and networking event designed specifically for parents and caregivers of infants, children and young adults with special needs. It's a "morning out" exclusively for adults, and will be held on Saturday, October 10, 2009, from 9:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. in Collegiate Hall at Muskegon Community College. Admission is free. Participants will enjoy a light breakfast while learning about resources available to their children.

Over 30 organizations have been invited to participate in Bridges 2009, including Community Mental Health, Goodwill Industries, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, MOKA and Pioneer Resources. Parents will be provided with information about resources

available to their special needs children as well as networking opportunities. In addition, workshops and discussions on technology, respite care, adult living, transportation, guardianship, job training and college and careers will be offered.

Bridges 2009 is being coordinated by parents who serve on the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) for the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD). SEPAC's mission is to promote partnerships among parents, students with special needs, local school districts and the MAISD.


Stacy Burns, who chairs SEPAC, said, "As parents and caregivers of children

with special needs, we understand the unique issues our kids face as they grow and become adults. We believe there are other children in need of support and services, yet the parents or caregivers may not even know that these resources exist."

Burns said SEPAC parents will assist in inviting parents to the "morning-out" event. "We are asking parents to make it a time just for them, to focus on the presentations and resources. If parents devote a little time now, they will most likely save time trying to track down services and supports later."

SEPAC, the MAISD and Muskegon Community College are co-sponsoring this event.

Tech Leadership Academy



The most effective ways for school administrators to promote technology use in their school buildings and districts is to make sure that they are knowledgeable about technology and are effective users of technology themselves. Often times professional development is delivered to teaching staff to help them become more comfortable and confident in integrating technology into their classrooms, but how often do building administrators have this same type of opportunity?

MAISD will offer a Tech Leadership Academy starting in October to help administrators learn more about current technologies and how they can be used in their jobs, as well as the importance of modeling this technology use in their buildings to help create a technology-rich school climate.

How can you "Tweet" to keep parents and community informed? Is it possible for the tiny computer that many of us carry on our belts to be used for educational purposes? How can a web log, or "blog," be used to help with communication within a building? These questions and more will be answered in the Tech Leadership Academy.

For further information or to register for the Tech Leadership Academy, please check online at www.muskegonisd.org/development.

Submitted by Randy Lindquist, Director of Technology, 231-767-7229 or rlindqui@muskegonisd.org

Parents to Learn How Talking Computers Can Help Children Read and Write

Submitted by Kristin Tank, Public Information Officer, 231-767-7263 or ktank@muskegonisd.org

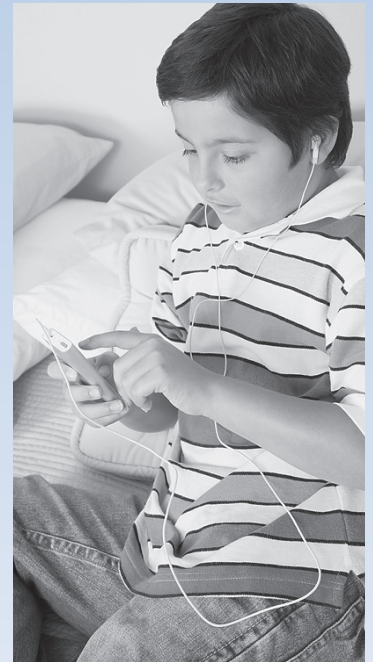
Educators, please encourage parents to attend this upcoming workshop:

A free workshop called *Supporting Students with Reading & Writing Difficulties* will be offered at the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD) at 630 Harvey Street in Muskegon on **Thursday, September 24, 2009**, and **Tuesday, September 29, 2009**, from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. Parents can choose to attend either of these sessions and may bring their 3rd through 12th grade children with them. At this workshop, parents of 3rd through 12th grade children who struggle to read and write will have a hands-on introduction to talking computer software that can help. Additional workshops will be offered in October and November as well. Please see the complete list of training dates and times listed at right.

The evening will provide parents and their children with a fun and interactive tour of a Windows-based software called Premier Accessibility Suite. It is already available in all schools located in Muskegon County and is also available at no cost for home use. Parents will learn

how their children might benefit from software that contains a talking word processor, text reader, talking dictionary, and audio file (MP3) conversion program.

Jim Kauppila, Assistive Technology Consultant, will explain how the system can work for children in both the classroom and at home. Kauppila has been helping students through the use of technology for the past 25 years. Organizers say he is known for his lively presentations, sense of humor, friendliness and vast knowledge base. This program is provided by the MAISD Special Education Parent Advisory Council. Space is limited, and parents must register in advance for the workshop by calling 231-767-7246



Supporting Students with Reading & Writing Difficulties WORKSHOP DATES

Thursday, September 24, 2009	Thursday, October 29, 2009
Tuesday, September 29, 2009	Tuesday, November 3, 2009
Thursday, October 22, 2009	Tuesday, November 10, 2009

Each session will take place at the Muskegon Area ISD in the Lighthouse PC Lab from 6:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.



Submitted by Jim Kauppila
Assistive Technology Consultant
231-767-7280 or
jkauppil@muskegonisd.org

MP3 Player Kits Added to the MAISD Lending Library

Five MP3 Player Kits have been assembled to provide area educators an opportunity to evaluate audio reading supports and to complement the availability of MP3-formatted books available from the MAISD. Each kit contains 10 players and headphones, a battery charger, and 12 batteries. One headset microphone is included in the kit along with Audacity software for creating MP3 files. Premier Assistive Technology's Text to Audio is also included to assist in creating MP3 files from text materials. These kits are now available for loan from the Assistive Technology Lending Library at the MAISD. Loan time will be limited so as many teachers as possible can have an opportunity to "try them before you buy them." If you have any questions, please contact Jim Kauppila.

Literacy Success For ALL Students!



Literacy expectations for children with significant cognitive disabilities have historically been low, and instruction has focused on learning functional sight words. Current research shows that a balanced literacy program incorporating all of the instructional components identified in the National Reading Panel Report (2000) is effective with students who have significant cognitive disabilities with the following qualifications:

- Literacy skills must be taught in the context of the students' own lives with explicit connections to their experiences.
- Adaptations must be made to support the unique strengths and needs of each student.

During the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years, more than 30 teachers and support staff who teach students with significant cognitive disabilities participated in a professional development series at the MAISD designed to support teachers in providing a balanced literacy program. Participants in this series acquired new resources and skills in language and literacy assessment and instruction, and applied those resources and skills in their classrooms.

Participants formed a learning community that continues to extend their experiences beyond their own classrooms as they share questions, concerns, and successes with facilitators and fellow participants.

The success of this project is best summed up by the comments of the participants:

"My students have improved academically beyond belief."

"I have seen growth in all areas: reading, writing and vocabulary"

"Students have a new-found confidence that 'I can read'. 'I can learn, too!'"

During the 2009-10 school year, several of the teachers will continue their learning by participating in a reading and writing workshop series offered to all elementary teachers in Muskegon County, with additional sessions to adapt the workshop model to meet the needs of their students.

Submitted by Mary Purtee

Augmentative Communication & Curriculum Consultant
231-767-7222 or mpurtee@muskegonisd.org

MAISD Online Registration for Professional Development



During the 2008-09 school year the MAISD transitioned to a new online registration system for professional development offerings. This new system offers efficiencies not only for MAISD staff, but also for those registering for courses offered through the MAISD.

The MAISD workshop registration process will be entirely electronic starting in the 2009-10 school year, including all registrations and attendee notifications. For this reason, it is important that all local district staff members make sure that their correct email address is in the system and that they

check their email often for notices sent. Notices will include registration confirmations, communication from instructors and cancellation notices.

The MAISD is pleased with this advancement in the use of technology to help local districts, in addition to MAISD staff, become more efficient in terms of the workshop registration process. If you have any questions or require assistance with the registration process, please contact the MAISD Registration Administrative Assistant, Tiffany Bonjerno, 231-767-7243, or via email at tbonjern@muskegonisd.org.

Submitted by Randy Lindquist, Director of Technology • 231-767-7229 or rlindqui@muskegonisd.org

Those Worried about a Child's Progress Urged to Seek Help Now

Submitted by Kristin Tank, Public Information Officer, 231-767-7263 or ktank@muskegonisd.org

Don't worry, but don't wait. Call today. This is the advice given to parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents, friends or neighbors who may be worried about a child's progress. Two free services exist in Muskegon County to help children who may not seem to be growing, developing, or learning at the same pace as others their age. Those concerned about these issues or a child's behavior, speech/language, physical impairments or delays are urged to visit www.1800EarlyOn.org or, for children over three years old, www.ProjectFindMichigan.org. Early On and Project Find of Muskegon can be reached by phone as well at 231-767-7253. These state and federally funded programs offer answers to questions parents may have, and, when needed, deliver services and support to children who qualify.

Last year in Muskegon County, Early On staff provided services and support to 349 infants and toddlers up to age three. The process may begin with a telephone call from a parent, referral from a physician, or a visit in the hospital when a child is born. It may lead to a visit at the child's home to learn more about the child's needs. If the child needs help, Early On staff will tell parents how to get that help at little or no cost. Infants or toddlers up to three years old may qualify for speech services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, or other support. Many times services are delivered directly to the child at home. Parents and caregivers are also given tips and support on how to assist the child. Last year Early On staff conducted almost 1,500 home visits in Muskegon County. Louanne Utzinger, Early On Coordinator, said, "Our Early On team is made up of friendly and supportive staff who listen carefully to what parents have to say. We offer suggestions and help parents help their children be successful."

Project Find's goal is to locate, identify and refer young people from birth to 26 years of age who have physical, social, emotional, or learning conditions that prevent them from doing well in school. These young people may be eligible for free educational services provided by Michigan public schools. Utzinger said, "We want to refer children who need support as early as possible so they may be more successful in the classroom and in life."

Early On is a federally-funded system of early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Project Find is funded under Part B of the same act through a grant from the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services. Both local programs are coordinated by the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD).



A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO YOUR BABY'S GROWTH

BY THREE MONTHS

Does your baby...

- Roll from side to side?
- Play with her hands?
 - Laugh out loud?
 - Look at a rattle?

BY SIX MONTHS

Does your baby...

- Pass things from one hand to the other?
- Look at herself in the mirror?
- Sit up with little support?
 - Roll over?

BY 12 MONTHS

Does your baby...

- Wave good-bye?
- Drink from a cup without help?
- Stand alone for at least two seconds?
- Use a few short words like "mama"?

BY 24 MONTHS

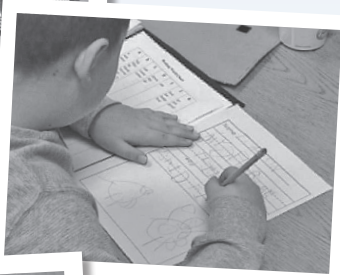
Does your toddler...

- Walk and run well?
- Handle a spoon well?
- Ask for things by name?
- Use two or three words together?

Thank You!

Community Support At Wesley School

Wesley School is very fortunate to have support from many organizations in the community. Here are some examples of that support:



- For over 40 years the Fraternal Order of Eagles has allowed the students of Wesley School to utilize their bowling alley. This provides instruction in the use of leisure and recreation time.
- The Muskegon Elks have also been very generous to the students of Wesley School. Picnics have been provided at the Elks Park, and a very special Halloween Party has been provided at the Club on Pontaluna Road.
- The Knights of Columbus #706 have provided funds for the school's annual prom for over ten years. Over 300 students and alumni attend each year.
- Employees from the Muskegon Target store serve dinner to the students who attend the annual prom.
- The Knights of Columbus #13579 purchased much-needed exercise equipment and a karaoke machine for student use. The Knights also brought the Tootsie Roll Train, complete with a car capable of carrying a student in a wheelchair for our Spirit Day Picnic.
- The AMBUCS, whose motto is "Creating Mobility and Independence for People with Disabilities," have provided Amtrykes for students with challenges to mobility.
- The Muskegon Shriners include Wesley School in their annual gift to the school children of Muskegon County, the marvelous Shrine Circus.

Wesley School students and staff would like to thank all the service organizations that give so much back to the community.

Submitted by Sue Ochs, Wesley School Principal
231-773-9158 or sochs@muskegonisd.org

Getting the Word Out About SB-CEUs

Submitted by Rochelle Barr Sartorius, SB-CEU Coordinator, 231-767-7267 or rsartori@muskegonisd.org

As more and more educators hold renewable certificates, the demand is increasing for SB-CEUs (State Board-Continuing Education Units). SB-CEUs can be earned for attending an approved inservice, workshop, training, or conference and used toward renewal every five (5) years. To renew a certificate, six (6) semester hours of appropriate coursework from an approved institution, 18 SB-CEUs, or a combination of both, are needed. Educators are now realizing the cost savings associated with SB-CEUs – a significantly better value than the current price of college credit.

The MAISD has been a state sponsor of SB-CEUs since the initial pilot program, launched during the 1993-94 school year. During the last school year, alone, the MAISD provided over 700 SB-CEU certificates of completion to educators.

As the “word gets out” about SB-CEUs, the number of requests for credit for professional activities has increased exponentially. Some of the more popular professional activities include regular committee meetings, new mentor teacher, new mentor principal, supervising student teacher or school counselor/psychologist, and serving on a “district” K-12 school improvement committee (this does not include a “building” school improvement committee – which is considered a regular committee meeting).

With more and more educators looking to professional activities to earn SB-CEU credit, it is important that the

Michigan Department of Education guidelines for receiving SB-CEU credit are available and that the requirements are explicit and understood by participating educators. As a state sponsor, the MAISD must follow the state requirements when issuing SB-CEUs.

Sources for information on SB-CEUs include:

- The MAISD website: sbceu.muskegonisd.org
- Updated information packets delivered to building principals this fall
- Monthly informational meetings held at the MAISD – for dates and times go to: www.muskegonisd.org/development
- School visits to review guidelines with staff upon request by calling 231-767-7267
- MDE website: www.solutionwhere.com/mi_sbceu
- Rochelle Barr Sartorius, SB-CEU Coordinator, MAISD, 231-767-7267

Administrators, teachers, counselors, and psychologists holding renewable certificates are encouraged to know the SB-CEU requirements associated with any planned activity prior to its commencement to ensure compliance and the earning of SB-CEU credit. To apply for the necessary pre-approval, please go to sbceu.muskegonisd.org and submit the required paperwork electronically, no later than 15 days prior to the first day of the activity.

H1N1 Pandemic Flu: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

By Dori Peters, Public Information Coordinator, Public Health – Muskegon County
Submitted by Kristin Tank, Public Information Officer
231-767-7263 or ktank@muskegonisd.org

A pandemic flu is a worldwide outbreak of illness caused by a new flu virus. Right now, a new H1N1 virus is causing a pandemic flu. Because it is a new kind of flu, many more people than usual may be sick this winter. Symptoms of the flu include fever (100°F or higher), cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people sick with the H1N1 flu have also had a runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

The flu spreads from person-to-person through coughing and sneezing (droplets), so it's really important to cover your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. The flu may also spread through contaminated surfaces, so make sure that you wash your hands often. Teach children these important actions as well. If you or a member of your family become ill with flu symptoms, avoid contact with others. You

may be ill for a week or longer. Stay home from work or school for seven days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer. Most people will recover from the flu without the need for medical care.

Flu shots are the best way to prevent the flu, and everyone is encouraged to get a seasonal flu shot this fall. However, this seasonal flu shot is not designed to protect you from the H1N1 flu. The U.S. government is working closely with vaccine companies to make a new vaccination specifically for H1N1 flu, and it is expected to be ready later in the fall.

Stay informed about the flu season. For local updates, visit the public health department's website at www.muskegonhealth.net.



Bring Out The Best In Challenging Home-School Partnerships

By Steven Vitto, M.A., Behavioral Support Consultant, MAISD
231-767-7277 or svitto@muskegonisd.org

Studies have consistently shown that family involvement is a major factor in student success. It can lead to empowered families, improved attitudes, reduced dropout rates, raised test scores, increased attendance, improved self-esteem, better behavior and more motivation (Broussard, 2003; Epstein, 2005; Ferrara & Ferrara, 2005; Witmer, 2005).

As we look at relationships and how they develop, they generally move from a casual connection to a more serious relationship. One of the problems with home-school partnerships is that sometimes things start off on a difficult note because the school or parents bring up uncomfortable issues before a real relationship has been established.

Before a parent is invited to the school to discuss a problem regarding their child, it is important that some prior attempt is made to establish positive rapport. First, parents need to hear the good things their child is doing at school. They need to hear about their child's successes, celebrations, and achievements. The importance of this effort cannot be underestimated. Regardless of the situation, parents need educators to see their child as a person with value, someone who has strengths as well as faults. If we are unable to give this to a parent, it is likely they will begin to feel that the school, teacher, or principal, does not care about their

child, or views their child only as an annoyance. The end result could be an adversarial relationship where everyone loses.

Tips for promoting positive home-school partnerships:

- communicate regularly, clearly and effectively
- quell fears with information
- verbalize caring for students
- be open to constructive criticism
- avoid taking things personally
- be honest
- admit when we are wrong and apologize with sincerity
- be respectful and professional
- be punctual
- be open-minded

For questions or comments, please e-mail Steve Vitto at svitto@muskegonisd.org. If you would like further information on this topic, the MAISD will be offering a one-day professional development opportunity entitled, "Breaking Down the Walls: Working with Challenging Home-School Partnerships" for K-12 Educators on October 22, 2009. You may contact Latesha Johnson at ljohnson@muskegonisd.org for more details on this upcoming workshop.

Broussard, C.A. (2003) Facilitating home-school partnerships for multiethnic families. *Children and Schools*, October 2003
School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action by Joyce L. Epstein. 2005 CORWIN PRESS

Parents as Partners Raising Awareness as a Teacher Preparation Program. Ferrara, Margaret M.; Ferrara, Peter J. Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas, v79 n2 p77-81 Nov-Dec 2005

The Fourth R in Education - Relationships Miriam M. Witmer, Millersville University Department of Educational Foundations The Clearing House :Volume 78, Number 5 / May-June 2005

Middle school students Flock To Summer Fun!



June 2009 marked the fourth year of the Middle School Summer Fun program hosted by the Muskegon Area Career Tech Center (MACTC). This year 180 students participated. Sixteen different classes were offered to current and incoming sixth through eighth graders. Each of these classes related to an area of study available to high school students.

One of the goals of the Summer Fun program is to get students excited about MACTC classes before they reach high school. By building awareness students can better prepare to incorporate career and technical education into their schedules as juniors and seniors. Judging by the number of smiles seen on the students' faces, and the positive comments received, these programs truly were summer FUN.



Student responses to the question,

“WHAT DID YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT THIS CLASS?”

“Making chocolate chip cookies and meeting new friends.”

Culinary Arts

“The teacher was funny, and we got to work on a Mustang!”

Auto Service

“You learn what kids like to do and how to have fun with math and science.”

Bright Beginnings

“Getting away from my brother.” *Welding*



Student responses to the question,

“WHAT DID YOU LIKE LEAST ABOUT THIS CLASS?”

“Are you crazy? There is nothing I liked least about this class!” *Electronics*

“Washing dishes every day.” *Culinary Arts*

“Classes weren't long enough.” *Auto Body*

“Nothing—liked everything.” *Metal Morphosis*



submitted by Stephanie Germaine, MACTC Student Outreach Specialist
231-767-3612 or sgermain@muskegonisd.org

Muskegon Area Career Tech Center Programs Offered

Each year the Muskegon Area Career Tech Center (MACTC) offers Career and Technical Education programs. This year the MACTC will offer programs for high school students in Muskegon County at the MACTC, Muskegon Community College, Booker Institute of Cosmetology, and the Habitat for Humanity and Green Home worksites. These programs are designed to prepare youth for a broad range of employment and training services and are offered under the guidance of certified teachers and support personnel. The following 20 programs are being offered this year:

- Auto Body Technology**
- Auto Service Technology**
- Commercial Art**
- Computer Aided Design (CAD)**
- Construction Trades**
- Cosmetology**
- Early Childhood Development**
- Electrical/Electronics Technologies**
- Financial Management/Accounting**
- Graphic Arts & Printing**
- Health Services**
- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration**
- Horticulture & Natural Resources**
- Internet, Network & Security Technologies**
- Machine Tool Technologies**
- Marketing/E-Commerce**
- Public Safety/Protective Services**
- Rehab Tech**
- Restaurant, Catering & Culinary Management**
- Welding Technologies**

All career and technical education programs follow the district's policies of nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, creed or ancestry, gender, age, height, weight, marital status or disability in all programs, activities, and employment. In addition, arrangements can be made to ensure that the lack of English language skills is not a barrier to admission or participation.

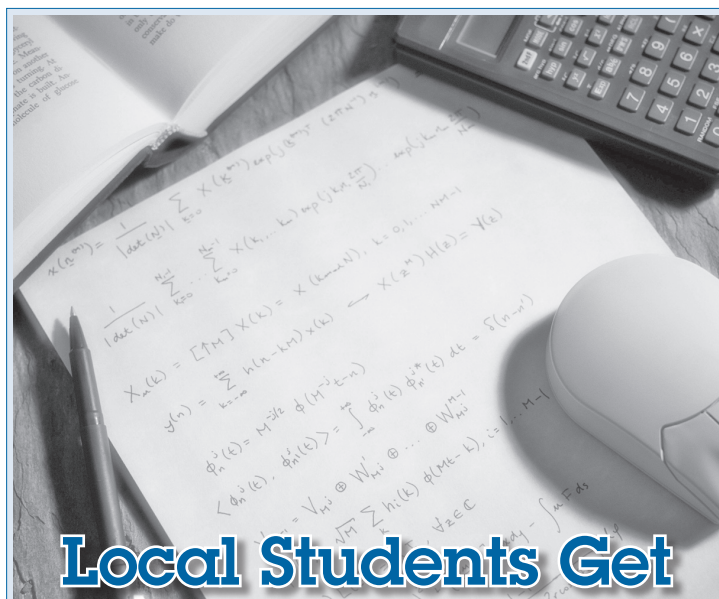
For information about these programs, contact:

Michael Carpenter, Principal
Muskegon Area Career Tech Center
200 Harvey Street • Muskegon, MI 49442
231-767-3605

Inquiries relating to issues of discrimination should be directed as follows:

Discrimination on the basis of a disability:
Assistant Director of Special Education
Muskegon Area Intermediate School District
630 Harvey Street • Muskegon, MI 49442
231-767-7249

All other discrimination inquiries:
Program Director – Human Resources
Muskegon Area Intermediate School District
630 Harvey Street • Muskegon, MI 49442
231-767-7213



Local Students Get **BACK ON TRACK!**

**June Au, Mathematics Education Consultant,
MAISD Regional Mathematics & Science Center
231-767-7326 or jau@muskegonisd.org**

The MAISD Regional Mathematics & Science Center, as part of Michigan's Math/Science Center Network, partnered with Michigan Virtual University and CompassLearning™ to bring *Back on Track: Ready for Algebra!* to eighth grade students in Muskegon and Newaygo Counties. This project was designed to better prepare students who may lack the necessary algebraic skills for success with the Michigan high school graduation requirements in mathematics.

Three hundred twenty-seven students were enrolled to receive 48 hours of mathematics support during a 16-week, after-school setting from February until June 2009. Highly-qualified teachers at 14 middle school sites assisted students and monitored their progress.

CompassLearning Odyssey® provided alternative learning options through the engaging on-line teaching and learning resources. Odyssey featured interactive activities with sound and animation to capture students' attention as they learned key algebra readiness concepts.

Four middle school sites continued this project by participating in the Michigan Virtual School Summer Math Camp. Fifty-nine students attended this 20-hour, two-week camp during June and July. "Campers" used ExploreLearning gizmos, specifically-licensed, innovative online manipulatives, to strengthen their study habits and deepen their understanding of key mathematics concepts. Students were assigned an "MVU camp leader" who led them through this virtual math camp experience.

Students who participated in *Back on Track* will have access to this online learning opportunity until the end of December 2009. Questions and comments may be directed to the MAISD Regional Mathematics & Science Center.

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Superintendent
Marios Demetriou
*Associate Superintendent for
Administrative Services*
Jeanette Magsig
*Associate Superintendent for
Academic Services*

MAISD News Staff

Jennifer Sleeper, Editor
jsleeper@muskegonisd.org
Kristin Tank, Editorial Advisor
ktank@muskegonisd.org
Inquiries should be directed to
231-767-7230

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www.muskegonisd.org

MAISD Mission Statement

The mission of the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District (MAISD) is to provide the leadership, programs and services which complement and enhance the efforts of constituent school districts in extending educational opportunities to all students.

It is the policy of the MAISD that no staff member, candidate for employment, program participant, or recipient of services shall experience discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, creed or ancestry, age, gender, height, weight, marital status, or disability. The MAISD is an equal opportunity employer. Inquiries related to issues of discrimination on the basis of disability should be directed to the Assistant Director for Special Education at (231) 767-7249. All other discrimination inquiries or requests for special accommodations to participate in a program, event, or activity should be directed to the Human Resources Program Director at (231) 767-7213.