



# BETTER TOGETHER

*Muncie Community Schools and Ball State University  
Office of Teacher Education Services and Clinical Practice*



**BALL STATE  
UNIVERSITY**



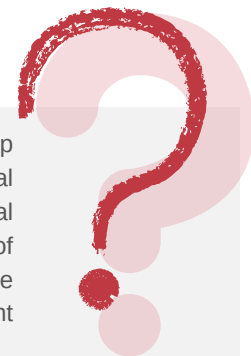
## Partnership Perspective

It's great to be in partnership with a university, but it can be a bit intimidating to know exactly who to call when you are in need of help. Enter **MCS-Ball State College Connections!** Each college on the university campus has been formally connected to one or more of the schools in Muncie Community Schools. Partnering for events, helping provide some manual labor or lending some expertise when it is needed, are all features of these closer relationships. So, when **Eric Grimm** (Principal at **Northside Middle School**) wanted to help **Bob Rector** (Passport Teacher) make a connection for an 8th grade College and Career Class, he reached out to **Russ Wahlers** (Department Chair for Marketing in the **Miller College of Business**). Russ went to work finding two faculty members who came to present on students' digital footprints as they prepare to apply for jobs. **Chris Wilkey** and **Austin Hostetter** (both Assistant Lecturers in Marketing) worked with students as they presented, "How to Use Social Media to Land a Job." Now, wasn't that easy?!?!



**DID  
YOU  
KNOW?**

This month marks a 4 year anniversary of the historic partnership between MCS and Ball State which began in the Indiana General Assembly. During a special legislative session, the Indiana General Assembly adopted IC 20-23-18, to authorize Ball State oversight of MCS. It also granted relief from debt and other restrictions to provide MCS with "all administrative and academic flexibility to implement innovative strategies."



On any given school day, you may see **Rahmed Paige** playing games on the job- that's because playing games is often one of the best ways for this Family Navigator at **Grissom Elementary School** to connect with students and help them learn a little more about themselves or the world around them!

The concept for the Family Navigators arose from a program introduced in Boston Public Schools in the 1990s. Together with colleagues at Boston College, the district put into practice what research indicated were best practices for bringing together school administrators, teachers, students, and families. The practice became known as City Connects and has been introduced in schools across the Midwest. MCS Family Navigators received training through Marian University prior to starting and are funded through a grant over the next 3 years.

**Ernest Brown**, Family Navigator at **Longfellow Elementary**, would echo the idea that no two days are alike! He became familiar with the school and community as he worked with the MP3 after-school program at Longfellow over the last 8 years. In January he began in the role and he sees his main objective as keeping families connected to the school. While Longfellow has a rich history of community involvement, the restrictions of COVID 19 and the pandemic certainly made it difficult to maintain close interaction and close ties. Ernest is immersed in the school and community as he works with teachers, students, families, caregivers, administrators, and other stakeholders across Whitley. These kinds of connections go a long way in making him a trusted resource to families who might need help.

Playing an important role to support teachers, families, and administrators can pull a person in lots of directions. But **Emily Boltz**, Family Navigator at **East Washington Academy**, recognizes the importance of this support stretch. Whether it is reviewing areas of strength and challenge with classroom teachers, referring students and families to vital community resources, or meeting with students one-on-one or in small groups to help resolve issues, she knows that the role of the Family Navigator is essential.

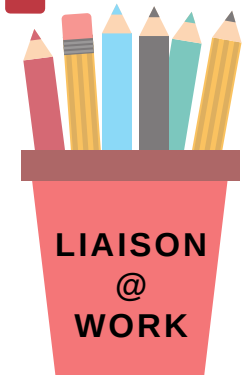
"Administrators can also get pulled in many directions, and I try to offer my time to help lighten the load when possible." Our hats off to all the Family Navigators in MCS, including **Haley Williams** at **South View Elementary**.



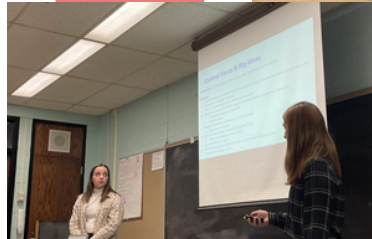
# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

*"Remember everyone in the classroom has a story that can lead to misbehavior, struggle or defiance. Nine times out of ten the story behind the behavior won't make you angry- it will break your heart." Annette Breaux*

*"Every child deserves a champion- an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be."*  
Rita Pierson



If you poll a random group of Americans, thousands would say that they have some level of math anxiety. For some, they never learned to be confident in the subject as young children. For others, their early interest may have been extinguished with rote mathematical exercises that divorced skills from real-world exploration and practical life applications. But **PDS liaison Andrew Gatz** believes that math is a dynamic human experience that marries student knowledge with helping those students investigate and understand a complicated world. As he works in the secondary schools of MCS, he brings this message and method to teachers working with students in the classroom. And he's more than willing to join theory to practice as he steps into the instructional leadership role to work with middle school students, modeling for classroom teachers how to proceed with discussion to better support student understanding. And for those teachers who want more of what he's offering, he has provided a host of great resources!



In his first year as a content-specialist PDS liaison for Muncie's secondary schools, Andrew has spent a good deal of time working with master teachers in each building as well as classroom teachers and their students at **Northside Middle School** and **Southside Middle School**. He has listened and offered support to math teachers in the district on topics ranging from content delivery to pedagogy to how to structure classroom space to support mathematical conversations. He also partnered with **Cresta Hancock** (Ball State Lecturer of Secondary Education and Teachers College Director of Secondary Education) this academic year to create a new course that immerses Math education majors in the middle/high school environment to learn and practice with students in those classrooms. Learning from both faculty members, these Ball State students planned, implemented, and evaluated a 5- lesson unit for middle school students that taught necessary skills in statistics to MCS students prior to state-mandated testing. During a recent visit to **Northside**, Ball State students were presenting and debriefing their unit plans. A key takeaway from their experience working with 6th graders at **Southside** was "maintaining a growth mindset." How important for teachers, students and future teachers to keep in mind!





The Indiana Department of Education has awarded **Muncie Community Schools** (MCS) a Next Generational School Improvement Grant (Next Gen SIG) totaling just over \$8 million. The district is one of a handful of local educational agencies in the inaugural cohort of Next Gen SIG recipients.

MCS will use the funding for primary literacy transformation at **South View Elementary**, **Grissom Elementary**, and **Longfellow Elementary** schools. The grant supports a one-year planning phase, followed by a three-year implementation phase. MCS will receive \$558,000 in planning dollars for the 2022-23 school year plus implementation money, over three years, totaling \$7.5 million. MCS will partner with SkyBound Education for strategic guidance and expertise.

## INNOVATION IN ACTION

### Ball State University Welcomes MCS 5th Graders for Enrichment Field Trip Series

For the last year, Director of Elementary Education for MCS, **Dea Bell**, and **Northview Elementary Principal, Heidi White**, have been planning a special set of field trips for all the district's 5th Grade students. In collaboration with Ball State's Office of Community Engagement, Cultural Corridor, College of Communication, Information & Media (CCIM), and the Office of Admissions, a series of enriching activities have been planned to give the 5th Graders of MCS a customized experience they will remember for years to come.

The students will on campus from Tuesday, May 17th through Thursday, May 19th, with two district elementary schools visiting on each of the three days. From 9:30 am to 1:30 pm, they enjoyed rotations between the Charles W. Brown Planetarium, David Owsley Museum of Art, a guided campus tour from Admissions, and a specially chosen set of CCIM activities. In preparation for the field trips, teachers presented five-station options created by CCIM educators to the students and allowed them to choose their preferred experience based on their interests. Between Esports, movie scenes, journalism, computer network creation, and persuasive speaking strategies, each child is sure to learn something interesting and unique during these interactive opportunities.

So, if you happen to be on the Ball State campus during these fun-filled days in the future, be on the lookout for hundreds of local students walking between venues or eating lunch together in The Quad, and feel free to shoot them a welcoming "Chirp Chirp!" You might just be greeting a future Cardinal in the making. We hope to offer a similar field trip opportunity annually and look forward to hosting the 5th Grade classes of Muncie Community Schools for years to come!



## WHO IS OTES-CP?

## MISSION STATEMENT

## OTES-CP STAFF

To foster a professional learning community within our sphere of influence that provides a dynamic network of research and professional development. We do this by identifying and partnering with those educational entities, which provide our students with vital clinical field experiences key to developing appropriate knowledge, skills and dispositions proven to have a positive impact on P12 learning.

Jon Dee-Director  
Sari Harris-Assistant Director  
Shelby Harris-Office Coordinator  
Chloe Thompson-Secretary  
McKenzie Criswell-Field Experience  
Coordinator  
Amy Gough-Post-Bac Licensing Coordinator  
Jane Thomas-Licensing Advisor

## CONNECT WITH US!

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