



# Mokena School District 159

## Board Highlights for December 15, 2021

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**Tax Levy Hearing:** No comments or objections.

### **Communications**

**Public:** Debi Blank spoke on behalf of Mokena Miracles and thanked all the building Principals for allowing the Penney Wars donation in their buildings. She also thanked teachers for taking the time to help their students with their donations and to all the parents who donated. All the money raised went to helping Mokena families who are struggling during the holidays.

**MTA:** Debi Blank spoke about the difficulty in getting substitute teachers in our buildings. The MTA supports the sub pay rate increase. Mrs. Blank gave a “shout out” to all the subs who consistently fill those sub positions!

**MCSA:** None.

**PTA/MEF:** None.

**BOE:** Mr. Everett mentioned that he attended the induction of Joe Cirelli as the new Fire Chief in Mokena. He shared that Chief Cirelli has served as a fire fighter for over 30 years and wished him the best in his new role.

### **Discussion – Joint Conference Reports**

Board President Bush asked the Board members who attended the 2021 Joint Conference to share their thoughts and experiences with the sessions they attended at the conference.

### **Information Reports**

#### **Superintendent – Dr. Cohen**

- U.S. News and World Report named both MIS and MJH to their list of BEST Middle Schools in the State of Illinois. The top 30 percent of schools were given this recognition. Schools were assessed on their pupils’ proficiencies in mathematics and reading, as measured by state assessment tests.
- Covid-19 Update – Cases in our area and among our students and staff are rising. We have 3x the number of cases in our community today when compared to August. Two classrooms have recently been quarantined due to multiple Covid cases in the same room. These quarantine orders come from the Will County Health Department
- MJHS Graduation – Lincoln-Way High School District 210 has graciously offered to host its feeder elementary district’s graduation ceremonies again this year. Mokena School District will be at Lincoln-Way West this year. The ceremony will be on Sunday, May 22, at 12 Noon. Using the outdoor setup, the number of guests will be unlimited. In the event of inclement weather, we will use the LW West gym (limited to 2 tickets, but the event will be streamed).
- Strategic Planning Follow Up – Dr. Johnson sent the curriculum group a video with a voice over of her slides and a link to a Google Form to collect feedback. The response rate to the survey was poor so Dr. Cohen reached out to each member again by phone to ask them to fill out the survey. A draft of the Strategic Plan will be ready for review at the January Board meeting.

#### **Assistant Superintendent of Instruction – Dr. Johnson**

- K-5 ELA Committee has been meeting weekly in the next steps towards a program adoption in the area of reading foundational skills. Teachers did an outstanding job identifying quality indicators for the district’s rubric that were based on professional learning this year as well as their experiences in the classroom and student needs. A big thank you to the following committee members: Lindsay Slager, Carrie Ballantine, Jackie Leffelman, Kathleen Arduino, Lisa Carroll, Sarah Borlee, Katherine Barr, Heather Esgar, Christine Wilkinson, Joyce Spalla, Tracy Driver, Courtney Schindler, Sharon Youngblood, Lisa Fiene, Allison Cirone, Kristin Johnson, Rachel Chorley, Dave McAtee, Megan Steelman.
- The December Early Release Day was full of many professional learning opportunities. MES offered foundational skills sessions presented by the reading specialists and instructional coaches. MIS worked collaboratively on next steps in their writing standards and discuss implementation in the classroom. MJH continued their work with AMLE with the next chapter in their all school book study. ELL teachers/specialists took part in a full day of learning with our

consultant from the IL Resource Center. Instructional Coaches at MES and MIS offered “Snack and Share” professional learning sessions to teachers in both November and December. The session topics were based on teacher feedback.

- Instructional Coaching Update – Coaches have been studying, training, and preparing to implement student centered coaching after winter break. This will include a deep dive into the core practices of student centered coaching, what coaching cycles may look like, and how to get started.
- ACCESS Data Summary – All English Language Learners take a yearly English Language Proficiency Assessment. ELL students must meet the criteria of an overall composite score of 4.8 to exit the program. Five of the eighty-three Mokena ELL students reached the overall composite score to exit the program.  
Summer Programming Student Data Summary – Goals of the program included filling in knowledge gaps due to the pandemic as well as offer a jumpstart to the next grade level. Dr. Johnson shared a chart representing the number of students who increased, decreased, or had the same scores in FastBridge from Spring to Fall.
- Mokena hosted two collaboration events with the Lincoln-Way feeder districts and the high school district this month. Each district shared the unique ways we are supporting our students as well as asked questions of one another to gain new ideas. Instructional coaches restarted the local coaching network that was paused during the pandemic.

#### **Director of Student Services – Ms. Cirone**

- Ms. Cirone shared a chart with current enrollment.
- SY 2020-21 Staffing Needs for Student Services – At this time, the department is adequately staffed. A Paraprofessional will be starting December 6th and a Paraprofessional will be starting January 4<sup>th</sup>. We continue to search for possible candidates who can provide support as a regular substitute Paraprofessional. The new physical therapist has started and has hit the ground running and the district is very pleased with the services provided.

#### **Chief School Business Official – Dr. Shaw**

- No Finance Committee meeting in December. The next meeting will be January 10, 2022.
- Finance Report – Posted on website.
- The roof top unit project above the MES office has been completed as well as work on a damaged fence.
- The district is looking to replace four of our fleet buses that will expire at the end of this school year.
- Business/Transportation and Technology have been working together to get new radios for the district. This includes the mobile devices for the transportation department on each bus as well as 10 administrative handheld radios and approximately 55 radios for building aides, paraprofessionals, specific certified staff and maintenance and custodial staff.
- New Building and Grounds Director, Dave Rana, will starting with the district effective January 1, 2022.
- The district will continue using Alliant Insurance Services as the provider for Workers’ Compensation.
- The 2021 tax levy generates income for the second tax payment in the 2021-22 school year and the first payment of the 2022-23 school year. Dr. Shaw provided a chart with the estimated impact on a \$300,000 house.
- Food Service Report – The total amount of funds brought in for November was \$47,520.47 and the most popular lunch was pancakes and waffles.
- Transportation Update – Ervin Walker has started in his role as Transportation Coordinator. The district is working on hiring more drivers. The district is implementing a plan to alleviate some of the crowding on the two busiest buses. The district will run a “sweeper” bus to pick up approximately 30 students off two routes.
- Building and Grounds Department – Each morning a thorough walk through is done to inspect the cleanliness of classrooms, hallways, bathrooms, and common areas. Any issues are addressed.

### **Director of Technology – Mr. Smith**

- 2021-22 Projects – All E-Rate projects have gone live and the 470 forms are just waiting for certification. Once projects are certified, we allow 28 days for open bidding. Bids will be selected on the scoring system laid out in the RFP. As soon as the district receives Funding Letters, we can finally proceed.
- Second phase of Flat Panels – The district was able to find a resolution for most of the current issues and now have a direct line with development for feature requests. Although not finalized, the department is leaning towards proceeding without MES expansion with BenQ.
- District Radios – The goals of updating radios are to solve the following problems: be able to communicate end-to-end in all three buildings; be able to communicate between buildings; have full bus radio coverage for the 12 square mile of the district boundaries. There will still be a radio-based issue that the district will still have. Police and Fire have trouble communicating inside of MES. In order to improve their functionality inside of the buildings, the district will need to install a bidirectional antenna (BDA) that works with the Will County 911 EMA system.
- Network Security Audit – The district will proceed with the CIS audit from Mindsight. Mindsight will do an audit of all aspects of our cybersecurity posture based on the current CIS standards.

**Principals Reports – Dr. Rolinitis** mentioned that MJH had a Christmas Door Decorating contest and invited the School Board to come and see the doors decorated by students. He also mentioned the band concert will be held Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at MJH. Dr. Rolinitis expressed his enthusiasm that 96 students have signed up for the Washington DC trip in April. **Mr. McAtee** mentioned D.A.R.E. graduation is Thursday, December 16<sup>th</sup> and invited the Board to attend. He also shared that MIS had a virtual author visit yesterday and all students received a copy of his book. **Mrs. Chorley** expressed her gratitude to all the sub teachers (referred to as “guest teachers” at MES) who continually fill those vacant openings. She also shared that the Tier III Intervention is completed and all students from K-3 have been screened.

### **Action Items that were approved include:**

- Previous Month Minutes
- District Bills
- Personnel – Classified – New Hire: Michael Burns, Kayla Swanson, Katie Bartnik. Classified – Leave of Absence: Mariann Rankovich. Classified – Resignation: Carolyne Scanlan, James Reberski. Certified – Long-Term Substitute: Laura Garza-Wojciechowski. Director – Amended Retirement Agreement: Ann Lewandowski. Director – New Hire: Dave Rana.
- Tax Levy Approval
- Consent Agenda – 1) Section 4 Policy Revisions, Adoption; 2) PRESS Policy Revisions – Adoption; 3) Apptegy Agreement; 4) ESSER Grant Expenditure Approval; 5) Sub Rate Pay; 6) 2022 Summer Hours.
- Approval of 2022-23 School Calendar
- Approval of 2022-23 Workers’ Compensation Renewal

### **For the Good of Mokena**

- Mr. Andresen thanked the Mokena Miracles for raising a lot of money to help out Mokena families in need.

**Respectfully,**

**Submitted on behalf of Dr. Mark A. Cohen, Superintendent**