



# MID-YEAR BOARD REPORT

February 2019

Superintendent  
Scott A. Menzel, Ph. D.

**EQUITY**



**INCLUSION**



**SOCIAL  
JUSTICE**

## BOARD OF EDUCATION

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# Students First.



## 2018-19 Washtenaw ISD Mid-Year Board Report

**Because we put students first,** and consistent with the Education 20/20 plan, the WISD Board has established these goals, adopting a lens of equity, inclusion, and social justice.

### **Board Commitment**

Resource allocation, policy, and practice is designed to close the opportunity gap to ensure equitable educational access for all students, with a specific focus on achieving an equitable system for students in poverty, students with disabilities, and students of color.

### **Board of Education**

Mary Jo Callan  
Diane Hockett  
R. Stephen Olsen  
Dr. Theresa Saunders  
Mary Jane Tramontin

### **Superintendent**

Dr. Scott A. Menzel

### **Goal #1:**

Provide leadership for equity and opportunity to ensure coordinated and aligned efforts from birth through college and career with specific attention to underserved students in Washtenaw County.

### **Goal #2:**

Cultivate an organizational culture of equity, inclusion, and social justice through education, engagement, and action.

### **Goal #3:**

Advocate for policies that support equity and inclusion on the local, state, and national levels.



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*Goal #1: Provide leadership for equity and opportunity to ensure coordinated and aligned efforts from birth through college and career with specific attention to underserved and underperforming students in Washtenaw County.*

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## EARLY LITERACY 0-3<sup>RD</sup> GRADE

The [Study of Early Literacy \(SOEL\)](#) continues into its sixth year, adding an additional 25 educators from K-3 classrooms across Washtenaw County. Coordinated by Melissa Brooks-Yip, SOEL is a network of educators focused on further developing teachers' deep knowledge of best practices in literacy instruction through a combination of book studies, teacher-action research, and professional development with experts in the field of early literacy. SOEL is organized into three cohorts that all directly align with the WISD's equity, inclusion, and social justice vision. While all three SOEL cohorts are rooted in the [Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy, K-3](#), SOEL Cohort 1 continues to specifically focus on equity, engagement and motivation in early literacy, with anchor texts such as "Equity in Early Childhood Education: Reclaiming the Child," and "No More Culturally Irrelevant Teaching."



The SOEL network makes meaningful connections with community organizations in Washtenaw County also serving educators, children, and families, such as with the University Musical Society around Arts Integration in Early Literacy and 826michigan, a non-profit writing center in Ann Arbor. SOEL educators participate in the WISD's Responsive Teaching Institute, which includes learning about culturally relevant literacy instruction from Notre Dame professor Dr. Ernest Morrell and Boston University professor Dr. Laura Jimenez.

In August 2018, a new PreK SOEL network was launched with a three-day institute. This unique cohort of 30 Head Start and Great Start teachers will focus specifically on the [PreK Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy](#).

## KINDERGARTEN READINESS ASSESSMENT

In the fall of 2018, the WISD facilitated the first large-scale administration of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in kindergarten classrooms across 21 Intermediate School Districts in Michigan. Also referred to as the Michigan Kindergarten Entry Observation, the KRA collected data on approximately 25,000 kindergarten students in the first weeks of school to help guide instruction and to provide district and state-level data on a large cohort of children using this research-based, developmentally appropriate

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assessment tool across four domains: language and literacy, mathematics, social foundations, and physical well-being and motor development.

The WISD's Melissa Brooks-Yip played a key role coordinating, communicating and training participating ISDs in the KRA, and we will continue to lead the expansion of the KRA implementation in 2019 after securing an additional \$1.5 million in the School Aid budget to support administration of the tool across 46 ISDs in the fall. WISD leadership continues to advocate for the implementation of an evidence-based observational assessment in kindergarten and we are communicating with the Michigan Department of Education to secure support for long-term administration of the KRA.



## WASHTENAW COUNTY MY BROTHER'S KEEPER



Washtenaw County My Brother's Keeper (WMBK) continues to grow and expand its network by providing leadership for equity and opportunity, while focusing on stability and sustainability. WMBK has expanded its three-year memorandum of understanding to include financial and in-kind support from Eastern Michigan University (EMU), in addition to the existing partnership between the WISD, Washtenaw County Government, the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office, and Ypsilanti Community Schools.

WMBK hosted its third local action summit at EMU on October 8, 2018, and successes included over 300 event registrations, 225 attendees, and the hosting of keynote speaker Trabian Shorters from BMe, who made a case for using asset-based frameworks. 75% of feedback respondents rated Shorters' keynote as "good" or "excellent." 115 attendees participated in breakout sessions, and 50-75% indicated their breakout sessions were "good" or "excellent."

Other key fall accomplishments include:

- WMBK continues to connect and build community among an intergenerational group of men of color. Within the last six months, WMBK hosted two "#50Strong" connecting breakfasts with attendance averaging 30 men/young men; filmed 20 interviews with young men of color for WMBK/Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation Media project; and attended a University of Michigan Men's Basketball game with these same young men to thank them for their contribution to the project.
- WMBK also worked with Ypsilanti Community Schools' Girl Magic partners to host two focus groups with girls of color. Focus groups provided young women with an opportunity to express the types of support they would like to see formed and/or expanded for themselves. The focus groups revealed the girls wanted access to projects and programs that are not necessarily considered "for girls." They were looking for meaningful mentorship, and they were most likely to name other women of color within their school as significant to their support system.

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## MENTAL HEALTH & TRAUMA

WISD continues to bring Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) to scale in Washtenaw County in all middle and high schools through Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students (TRAILS). TRAILS Cohort 3 training occurred on January 10, 2019, and over 60 people registered for training. All middle and high schools in Washtenaw County are or will be leading Peer-to-Peer mental health awareness campaigns. Washtenaw County Community Mental Health (CMH) continues to offer training on how to utilize their 24-Hour Mobile Crisis Team, as well as training on a suicide risk assessment for school behavioral health staff. Four more training dates are scheduled for Spring 2019.



The University of Michigan Depression Center, in partnership with the WISD, received U.S. Department of Education funding to partner with Lincoln and Ypsilanti schools to deliver additional mental health supports aligned with the Regional Alliance for Healthy Schools (RAHS) clinics. This five-year grant will provide funding, services, and expansion of TRAILS in these two districts and will allow for personalized deliverables based on each district's needs.

The WISD is also partnering with the Office of Engage@EMU and the county school social workers to offer a professional learning sequence. Topics include: An introduction to the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs); beyond the behavior – identifying, acknowledging and treating trauma at school; understanding secondary trauma; and building resilience and mindfulness.

Success by 6 Great Start Collaborative (SB6GSC) secured a three-year grant from Michigan Medicine for the WISD to act as the community coordinator to develop a network of community partners to bring the Mom Power program to Washtenaw County. Mom Power is a multi-week intervention program that supports parents who have experienced trauma to positively parent their young children.



## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE & INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

After convening a steering committee during Summer 2018, a county vision and initial training for restorative justice was developed. Training for peer-to-peer restorative justice groups, modeled after the Sky Squad, launched in January 2019. The WISD is also working with several schools who are working towards deeply integrating restorative practices into their buildings this spring, with the goal to further

expand training opportunities for students and staff during the 2019-2020 school year.

In December and January, Sarah Giddings presented to the Washtenaw County high school principals', superintendents' and curriculum directors' groups to share the initial administration of the ACT Tesseract, a social and emotional learning assessment tool, and reviewed the differences with the prior assessment. The group discussed how they have been using the data to inform their local leadership within their buildings.



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## JUSTICE LEADERS & YOUTH DIVERSITY FORUM

The Core Justice Leaders course and Advanced course were offered again this year. Four cohorts of the core course, with 30-40 participants each, was offered and one Advanced course was offered.

The Youth Diversity Forum was held for the 7<sup>th</sup> year in a row in partnership with the Neutral Zone. Over 100 youth from 12 schools participated. This year's forum was held at WISD and some of the sessions were planned and facilitated by youth from local districts. Facilitators continued to guide students in better understanding their various social identities. The first breakout session focused on stereotypes and assumptions, and the second session was about how students can act as allies in instances of sexual harassment and assault – a topic chosen by student facilitators.



## RESPONSIVE TEACHING INSTITUTE

Due to the vast array of educators who demonstrated interest in the 2017-18 Responsive Mathematics Institute, which specialized in amplifying the practice of culturally relevant teaching in mathematics, the 2018-19 Responsive Teaching Institute was launched in the fall. The 2018-19 Responsive Teaching Institute provides a series of professional development sessions for educators seeking to grow their culturally relevant teaching practices by learning from nationally recognized speakers in Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, the Arts, and Educational Leadership.



Attendees span across both Washtenaw and Livingston Counties, and also drew in some participants from other neighboring counties. Among our existing attendees are teachers and building administrators from elementary, middle school, and high school. The Responsive Teaching Institute also welcomed superintendents from Milan and the WISD to their fall sessions.



Existing network meetings for SOEL were intentionally aligned and set within dates of the Responsive Teaching Institute to ensure teachers incorporated understanding around Responsive Teaching into their Study of Early Literacy instructional practice. With guest speaker Dr. Ernest Morrell, SOEL teachers were able to collaborate with Dr. Morrell around their book study of his text "Every Child a Super Reader," beginning with the Responsive Teaching Institute's kick-off on August 26, 2018.



## BIRTH TO THREE MICHIGAN MANDATORY SPECIAL EDUCATION (MMSE) SERVICES TRANSITION

After a year of transitioning county-wide special education services for children ages birth to three from eight local school districts to the WISD, the WISD's Early Intervention team is fully staffed with 16 individual staff members (14.1 FTE). The Early Intervention team developed individualized transition processes with local school districts to support the movement of special education services from Part C/MMSE (birth to three years old) to Part B (three to 26 years old).

Following this transition, the WISD's data is reflecting an increase in the number of total children eligible and children eligible for special education services. The WISD saw an overall increase of 26.2% of total birth to three children served and an increase of 29% of children served under Michigan Mandatory Special Education Services.

## TRUSTED ADVISOR PARENT LEADERS

Success by 6 Great Start Collaborative (SB6GSC) secured funding to continue the Trusted Advisor Parent Leaders from the United Way Opportunity Fund and Washtenaw County Office of Community Economic Development (OCED). An additional proposal is being developed to request support from the WISD. To date this school year, a team of 11 Trusted Advisor Parent Leaders have supported 415 families with young children in connecting directly to early learning programs and community resources, which directly aligns with the WISD's Educational Equity Policy urging our agency to more intentionally engage with the community. The Parent Leaders shared their lessons learned with several stakeholder groups throughout the fall.



As a result of information gleaned from canvassing, the Parent Leaders have worked with the Washtenaw County Health Department and OCED to form a Sycamore Meadows Tenants Association. They supported the Sycamore Meadows community through phone canvassing after a series of shootings in that community. The Parent Leaders organized a "Summer Fun Day" and a holiday tenant party to build relationships with families. With support from SB6GSC, they are also launching a parent support group modeled after the SURE Moms Group (SURE stands for "Sisters United, Resilient & Empowered"), and they hosted their first meeting in late December. This is a partnership project with the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office Street Outreach team. Additionally, the Parent Leaders have supported several truancy cases by building a relationship with a parent to help with wrap around needs identified by the parent. This has been a positive experience to authentically connect with parents who have traditionally been very resistant to opening up to school staff related to barriers to school attendance.

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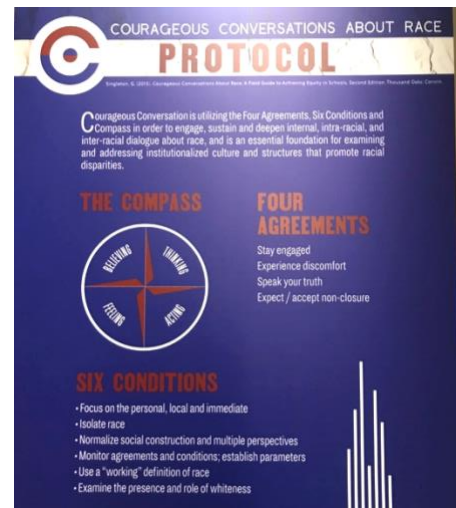
## *Goal #2: Cultivate an organizational culture of equity, inclusion, and social justice through education, engagement and action.*

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### EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE WITHIN WISD

The WISD's cabinet-level leadership team, which includes supervisors, directors, executive directors, assistant superintendents and the superintendent, is participating in five days of the Justice Leaders training together. To date, four sessions have been held and the final session is upcoming.

The WISD sent 16 total staff and Board of Education members to the Pacific Education Group's (PEG) Courageous Conversation National Summit in Philadelphia in October 2018. This is the second year the WISD has sent a team to the Courageous Conversation Summit. Team members have been incorporating the Courageous Conversations About Race Protocol, which outlines four agreements and six conditions, as well as using the compass (*see illustration*), to frame and guide conversations regarding race throughout various departments' work. Efforts are underway to schedule "Beyond Diversity" training in Washtenaw County for Spring/Summer 2019.



The WISD coordinated and hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Midwest Forum on Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusive Practices in August 2018. Representatives from ISDs in Michigan and an Educational Service Center in Ohio participated in the two-day workshop that was facilitated by Dr. Kathy O'Bear. Participants walked away with tools to assess and work on creating effective multicultural organizations and develop inclusive communities.

### HIRING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The Human Resources department is working thoughtfully and diligently to strive towards the WISD's vision of equity, inclusion, and social justice in the agency's recruiting and hiring practices. Thus far this school year, the HR department has shared 62 postings or re-postings for 49 positions at the WISD, and continues to focus on equitable, inclusive, and socially just HR policies and practices.

Policies and practices that have been revised or have had increased focus include:

- Adding the WISD's mission and vision statements to job postings so applicants are aware of these statements prior to and at the time of application.
- Increasing opportunities for more diverse candidates to apply for WISD positions by improving access to position postings through additional job sites such as K12jobspot, indeed.com, Michigan School Business Officials posting board (if applicable to position), and Handshake (an online posting board that immediately distributes job postings through six Michigan universities).





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- Adding questions specifically related to equity, inclusion, and social justice to interview questions for round 1 and round 2 interviews to gain a better understanding of applicants' thoughts on these issues and concepts.
  - Increased attention and effort to ensure interview panels are diverse and that an HR representative is included on every interview panel for all interviews.

## EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE, AND SOCIALLY JUST RESOURCE ALLOCATION & FUNDING

The WISD continues to prioritize and allocate funding for activities that support equity, inclusion, and social justice within the organization. The Board of Education and WISD leadership drive funding decisions using the Six Guiding Questions outlined in the Educational Equity Policy adopted by the WISD in June 2018. These guiding questions keep students with IEPs, students of color, and students in poverty at the center of all decision-making, including financial decisions, within the agency.



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*Goal #3: Advocate for policies that support equity and inclusion on the local, state, and national levels.*

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## LAUNCH MICHIGAN LITERACY WORKGROUP

Assistant Superintendent Naomi Norman is serving on the Literacy Committee of the LAUNCH Michigan initiative. LAUNCH Michigan is a partnership of business, civic, and education leaders creating a shared agenda for improving education in Michigan. The Literacy Committee of this initiative is made up of literacy experts, education practitioners, researchers, business leaders and educational organizations, and is making policy recommendations around the improvement of literacy preK through adulthood. The committee has developed five policy recommendations ranging from talent development systems to curriculum supports to leadership oversight. The final recommendations will be vetted and released along with many others by the LAUNCH Michigan Steering Committee.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY:

### EARLY ON (0-3), HEAD START, AND THE GREAT START READINESS PROGRAM

2018-19 is on track to be another successful year for the WISD's Early Childhood team. Executive Director of Early Childhood Programs Alan Oman has been serving as a Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE) representative on a joint MAASE/Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council Workgroup. This joint workgroup has been investigating potential revisions and improvements to Michigan's practices related to providing special education services for children from birth to age three. In addition, the state's FY19 School Aid budget included a new \$5 million allocation to enhance existing federal Part C of IDEA funding for coordination of services for children ages birth to three – a direct result of advocacy efforts from MAASE and the Early Childhood Administrators Network (ECAN). The

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Early Childhood department secured a five-year renewal of the federal Head Start Grant and completed a successful program audit by the Michigan Department of Education of our state funded Great Start Readiness Program. The WISD continues to work with 18 local partners (9 LEAs, 3 Public School Academies, and 6 community-based child care providers) to provide high quality, prekindergarten services to over 900 low-income three- and four-year-old children.



The WISD also continues to advocate at the state-level for additional resources to fulfill the unmet need for prekindergarten classrooms in both Washtenaw County and across the state. Alan Oman, Executive Director of Early Childhood Programs, serves on the Board of Directors for the Michigan Head Start Association, serves as a member of the Executive Committee of MAISA's Early Childhood Administrators' Network, and also leads the legislative and advocacy committees for both organizations. In these roles, Alan's input and suggestions were sought after for newly-elected Governor Whitmer's Transition Team. Given Governor Whitmer's election platform that included a promise of support for universal prekindergarten for children in Michigan, the WISD anticipates 2019 will be a noteworthy year for early childhood advocacy efforts.

## EARLY LITERACY ADVOCACY



Assistant Superintendent Naomi Norman and Melissa Brooks-Yip continue to serve on the Early Literacy Task Force, convened by the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA). On October 30, 2018, Assistant Superintendent Norman stepped down as the Co-Chair of the Task Force. Sean LaRosa, from Livingston Educational Service Agency (LESA) and Kyle Mayer from Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD) stepped in to co-chair the vacated role.

Assistant Superintendent Naomi Norman continues to serve on the Governor's PreK-12 Literacy Commission. The PreK-12 Literacy Commission is responsible for advising and assisting in matters relating to the assessment, professional development, education programming, socioeconomic challenges, best practices, collaboration, parental engagement, and teaching of literacy across Michigan. The Commission held listening sessions throughout the state, including one at Eastern Michigan University that was attended by educators from Washtenaw County.

## MENTAL HEALTH & EDUCATION IN THE WASHTENAW COUNTY JAIL

The cooperative agreement between the WISD, Ann Arbor Public Schools, and the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office was signed and approved this year. Responsibility for serving school-age youth in the jail transitioned to the WISD under this agreement and staff were hired. Our team consists of a Youth Transition Manager, an Adult Education Teacher, a Teacher Consultant, and ancillary services as needed. Educational programming was redesigned and expanded, and an initial budget was developed integrating

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several revenue sources such as Title 1D funding, Section 107 Adult Education funding, and the Special Education Millage. The WISD has facilitated establishing in-house and community partnerships with Community Mental Health, Dawn Farms, the Sheriff's Office Street Outreach Team, local adult education agencies, Washtenaw Community College, local school districts and the Young Adult Project. Michigan Rehabilitation Services is now working in the jail two times a week and supports qualifying students in paid work experiences upon release. The WISD's team is actively coordinating transition plans with the goal of successful re-entry into the community and re-engagement in education. The program has currently enrolled 36 students and four graduated from jail education service programs since November 1, 2018. In addition, three students from our program enrolled in Washtenaw Community College for the upcoming Winter 2019 Semester.

## STATE FINANCE STUDY

Currently, the School Finance Research Collaborative (SFRC) is in Phase II with an emphasis on a public education campaign with generous funding from both the Kellogg and Mott Foundations. Governor Whitmer expressed support for the recommendations from the study and it is expected that aspects of the recommendations will be incorporated in her initial budget proposal as Phase III of the SFRC work begins. Superintendent Menzel serves on the SFRC Technical and Steering Committee.

## MISTEM REGIONAL NETWORK

On October 1, 2018, the WISD hired D. Scott Heister as the MiSTEM Region 2 Director, who manages the MiSTEM Network Regional Grant and the work of Region 2, which includes six counties: Hillsdale, Lenawee, Livingston, Jackson, Monroe, and Washtenaw.



Accomplishments of the network during its initial launch include:

- Developing a Regional Needs Assessment with Hanover Research that was implemented throughout the region in mid-January. This needs assessment will provide baseline data on current efforts around STEM education in the region, as well as identify regional and district-specific needs as they relate to increasing high quality STEM experiences to students throughout the six-county region.
- Introducing the MiSTEM Network at all six counties' Superintendents Meetings.
- Creating the [MiSTEM Region 2 Website](#), plus a communication listserv for MiSTEM Region 2 partners and a Twitter account (@MiSTEMRegion2).
- Developing a Regional Michigan Advancing Equity in STEM Leadership Team. This team will have four statewide professional learning sessions, with each followed by a Regional Team Planning and Implementation meeting to reimagine what could look different about STEM education if it was grounded in deep, transformative, and consistent equity commitments. This professional learning series will help build capacity of building-level and district leaders across Southeast Michigan to identify, implement and support multiple strategies for improving equity and access to relevant mathematics and science learning for K-12 students.



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## WASHTENAW COUNTY'S 2019 OPPORTUNITY INDEX

The WISD has been working with a broad cross-sector of stakeholders, led by Teresa Gillotti and the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development, to update the Opportunity Index. The University of Michigan's Poverty Solutions office is providing the back-end support for the revised and updated Opportunity Index, and some revisions to the indicators have been recommended based on available data and a commitment to ensuring the data that is used leads to action. WISD remains the key point of contact with respect to the education data in the index and it is expected to launch in Spring 2019.

### FIBER CONSORTIUM SERVICES:

#### THE MICHIGAN STATE EDUCATION NETWORK (MISEN)

The WISD provided Fiber consortium services for network connectivity and connection to the Michigan State Education Network (MISEN) for all nine LEAs and the WISD's programs and schools. This includes support for:

- Physical Fiber Plant
- Core Network Infrastructure and Equipment
- Network Security
- Internet Connectivity
- State Data Hub



In addition to connection to other educational entities across the State of Michigan, the MISEN connection significantly lowered the cost of internet service for a savings of \$107,887 during this school year.