

Operational Supports Center of Excellence Update

A range of business and operational services that support educational excellence in local school districts.

Month: December 2024

Administrator: Tom Zahrt, Deputy Superintendent

Update: Construction of Career Center – The construction of the career center is going well and most of the work has moved indoors for the winter. There is a large amount of drywalling going on, much of it on weekends so that they do not get in the way of the other contractors who are installing technology, tile, framework, and equipment.

Additionally, CSM, Plante Moran, and Wightman are all verbally good with our offers to financially support the project calendar / schedule extension due to Wightman and CSM contractors. Scott Thomas has done an incredible job of staying on top of our contracts that we have in place with them and has scrutinized the proposed agreements with a fine-tooth comb. We have minimized our expenditures with their delays even as they have continuously tried to circumvent me knowing that they will find Scott and I holding them accountable for what they signed up for in our original agreements.

We continue to work through the equipment procurement process to ensure we secure what we need to outfit the center programs and operations. Much of the equipment has been identified and we will be bringing additional purchase requests to the board for approval. Eric Stewart and the Career Connect Team have been leading that work and I continue to support them with questions that affect facilities infrastructure.

The update on Career Connect Center teacher union negotiations is that we continue to meet and negotiate with the MEA (Michigan Education Association). We have reviewed the complete contract proposal of the union with them, and we are now preparing our proposal of a complete contract from our perspective. Our aim is to agree on a contract that supports our work to create a world-class center that is a notable example of administration and staff working together in the best interests of students and the local community.

With Sandy Barry-Loken's leadership, the rebranding work has come along nicely and is completely aligned with the centers of excellence framework. We will be working on our website next and will plan for a complete rollout of the new brand over the next approximately 18 months. We are moving forward completing our facilities' master planning and we are now at the stage where we are going to begin to gather input from stakeholders on future facilities' needs to incorporate into our planning, tied to cost and funding availability, as well as board approval.

Meredith Lewis has done an excellent job of building the HR team back and beyond what we have historically had, with more resources and support to get the important work done which includes recruiting, benefits management, culture and belonging, as well as HR information systems.

Action Item: None at this time

Fiscal Impact: None at this time

Attachments: None at this time