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Governor



Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman
Secretary
Education and Workforce
Development Cabinet

Kevin C. Brown
Interim Commissioner of Education

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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June 17, 2020

Waylon Allen, Superintendent
Middlesboro Independent School District
220 N. 20th St.
Middlesboro, KY 40965

Dear Superintendent Allen:

As you know, one goal of Kentucky Statewide Consolidated Monitoring (KSCM) is to help create opportunities for the programs in our schools and districts to look at new ways to collaborate and collectively meet our ultimate goal: increasing student achievement while closing gaps and positioning our students to be college- and career-ready. The team members from your visit have engaged in this collaborative process in order to produce the attached Consolidated Monitoring Report.

During the 2019-20 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) conducted monitoring in the Middlesboro Independent School District. During this process, KDE program staff, utilizing program-specific monitoring tools, conducted on-site visits for the following programs:

- Title I, Part A
- Title II, Part A
- Title III/English Learners
- Title IV, Part A
- Title V, Part B
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Alternative Programs
- Preschool

Each program involved in the KSCM has an impact on our goal. For example, Title II, Part A focuses on improving teacher and principal quality to ensure that all students have equal access to highly qualified and effective teachers and leaders. Title I programs provide not only funding, but also guidance on working with disadvantaged students.

These programs and the others engaged in consolidated monitoring can work together to achieve more collaboratively than any of them could alone.

This report is the result of what can be best described as a “snapshot” of the district taken during our visit. It begins with identifying “effective practices.” These are individual program practices that the team felt were effective, and in some cases innovative. We strongly suggest that the practices identified be submitted to the KDE Best Practices [website](#).

In addition, the monitoring team collectively discussed the findings and concerns of each program to identify Opportunities for Improvement. This represents a consolidation of findings reported by individual programs that were similar in nature and therefore present a potential opportunity for collaboration between identified programs. Each of these concerns has been identified by at least two program areas. Each district program has already been provided an individual report as required by federal or state law. All findings will need to be addressed by district program areas as specified in the individual reports.

In the meantime, if you have questions regarding specific program monitoring requirements, please contact the individual program contacts listed in this report. If you have questions concerning the consolidated monitoring process, please contact Brenda Considine at (502) 564-3791, extension 4045, or via email at brenda.considine@education.ky.gov. Information regarding education programs within the state of Kentucky may also be found at www.education.ky.gov.

Thank you for your work in improving Kentucky’s education programs to better serve our children.

Sincerely,

Kelly Foster, Ed.D.
Associate Commissioner
Office of Continuous Improvement and Support

KF/TR/BC/vb

Attachment: Consolidated Monitoring Report for Middlesboro Independent Public Schools

2019-2020 Statewide Consolidated Monitoring Report

District:	Middlesboro Independent School District	
Date(s) of Visit:	February 18-20, 2020	
Team Leads: <i>(List primary person on this visit for each program.)</i>		
<i>Title I, Part A – Jeanna Gonzales</i>	<i>Title V, Part B – Jeanna Gonzales</i>	
<i>Title II, Part A – Kathy Collins</i>	<i>Preschool – Malaika Williams</i>	
<i>Alternative Programs – Donna Montgomery</i>	<i>Career and Technical Education – Karla Tipton</i>	
<i>Title III/English Learners (EL) – N/A</i>	<i>IDEA – Jessica Jones</i>	
<i>Title IV, Part A – Doug Roberts</i>		

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 1

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I, Part A		IDEA	X
	Title II, Part A		Career and Technical Education	
	Title III/English Learners		Alternative Programs	
	Title IV, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	
Student Services				
<p>The degree and quality of wraparound services provided for students and their families in the district were widely reported to be of high quality, including services provided by the district’s social worker and the partnership with Cumberland River Comprehensive Care. The school resource officers also have strong caring and mentoring relationships with students.</p> <p>A third monitoring team had recommendations for improving student services (see “Final Overview” section).</p>				

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Highlight of Effective Practice No. 2

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I, Part A	X	IDEA	
	Title II, Part A		Career and Technical Education	
	Title III/English Learners		Alternative Programs	
	Title IV, Part A		Gifted and Talented	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	
<p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>The district supports and encourages professional development for teachers and administrators. Professional learning expenditures were approved in the district application and matched the MUNIS report.</p>				

Highlight of Effective Practice No. 3

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I, Part A		IDEA	X
	Title II, Part A		Career and Technical Education	
	Title III/English Learners		Alternative Programs	X
	Title IV, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	
<p><u>Climate and Culture</u></p> <p>Facilities the monitoring teams visited were clean and schools provided a welcoming environment. It was evident that the school community is supported by positive adult/student relationships and interactions. The positive relationships between the high school students and the school resource officer were readily apparent during hallway observations.</p> <p>During the visit, a positive school climate was observed and communicated to the IDEA monitoring team during discussions with staff and administrators in buildings. Staff were focused on supporting student needs given the resources available. An open and transparent visit was conducted via comprehensive interviews, record reviews and a willingness by staff to explain program components. The student, staff and faculty relationships and engagement levels were observed to be strong and focused on student growth.</p> <p>Based on observations and interviews with students and staff, the overall climate and environment at the Middlesboro Alternative program seems to be positive and safe. Students are included regardless of background, ability or academic achievement. Students indicated that there is at least one caring adult in the program they can go to for help, guidance and support.</p>				

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Opportunity for Improvement No. 1

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I, Part A	X	IDEA	X
	Title II, Part A		Career and Technical Education	
	Title III/English Learners		Alternative Programs	X
	Title IV, Part A		Gifted and Talented	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	X
Common Issue				
<p><u>Parent and Family Engagement</u></p> <p>Multiple involvement and engagement opportunities exist for parents having young children. Interviews reflect support of parents and caregivers beyond school-specific situations, and these efforts have the potential to impact the social, emotional and future academic success of young children. Despite these endeavors, the district seems to struggle to increase parent and family engagement.</p> <p>Interviews with staff at the Middlesboro Alternative program revealed that some students' contact information changes often and as a result, it has become more challenging to communicate academic progress, behavior successes, transition and basic school information to caregivers.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<p>The district should develop a more cohesive plan to engage families in meaningful two-way communication and should work to collaborate with schools for ideas on getting families in the schools to be involved in the education of their children. In addition, the schools are encouraged to be intentional with engaging families and transparent about opportunities for parents' participation in learning about the Title I, Part A program. Parents should be informed about Title I, Part A requirements, such as their right to be involved in the planning, review and improvement of the parent and family engagement policy, compact and sharing information about the schoolwide program plan.</p> <p>The Alternative Education monitoring team recommends the district use collaborative tools such as Google platforms (e.g., Google Docs), Classroom Dojo and so on, that parents and students can access. The district might consider administering online surveys for parent feedback. The district may need to expand outreach beyond parents to include the community at large since so many students live with other family members.</p>				

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Opportunity for Improvement No. 2

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I, Part A	X	IDEA	X
	Title II, Part A	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title III/English Learners		Alternative Programs	X
	Title IV, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	
Common Issue				
<p><u>Policies and Procedures</u></p> <p>Several concerns around the district’s policies and procedures were identified across monitoring teams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some policies are not reviewed or revised regularly. • The district was not able to produce written copies of some required policies. • The Title II and IV-A monitoring teams found stakeholders are not invited to provide input on how funds are spent in the district. The superintendent and finance officer often make these decisions without stakeholder consultation, which connects to policy and procedure around planning and budgeting. • Student interviews with the Alternative Education monitoring team revealed an inconsistency in perceptions as to whether a program orientation, exit criteria and progress monitoring were in place. Students may benefit from a more structured process regarding entry and exit criteria. Additionally, there is little evidence to indicate that Odysseyware is preparing students for future success. Interviews revealed that some students who attend the virtual program find it difficult to stay focused during online coursework. • Special education policies and procedures are in place, but are not followed as documented in due process records. • Walkthroughs at all schools in the district revealed the lack of schoolwide behavior expectations posted in common areas. 				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<p>The district is encouraged to work with its designated KDE Title I consultant to determine which Title I policies are needed. It might be helpful to start a checklist for each school to track policies and procedures as they are finalized.</p> <p>With respect to entry and exit criteria for the Middlesboro Alternative Program, the district should provide more clarity around academic goals. Scheduling progress reports with teachers and DJJ (Department of Juvenile Justice) staff may be helpful. Also, the district should initiate discussions about IEP (Individual Education Program) reviews, ILPAs (Individual Learning Plan Addenda), short and long-term goals and discussion of each student’s areas of need and growth. Not all students at the Middlesboro Alternative School participate in online programs all day but</p>				

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for those who do, the district should consider integrating instructional strategies such as project-based learning and direct instruction with the online learning.

Finally, the district should develop a policy or procedure that includes consultation of stakeholders in the creation of the Title II and IV-A plans, including the way funds will be spent. In addition to meeting program requirements, this type of collaboration could improve communication and strengthen internal controls.

Opportunity for Improvement No. 3

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I, Part A	X	IDEA	
	Title II, Part A	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title III/English Learners		Alternative Programs	
	Title IV, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	
Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i>				
<u>Finance</u> District finance staff members are experienced in ensuring expenditures in MUNIS match the approved application in GMAP, and there are processes in place to track district reservations and school allocations. However, the monitoring teams identified some concerns around internal controls. For example, the finance officer currently requests the Title II coordinator’s approval on payments without providing evidence of the expense. If the expense is for anything other than a salary, more information needs to be shared before payment.				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
Documentation of expenditures from Title II funds should be addressed. The district should establish internal controls around payments using federal funds. Improved communication between central office, finance and school administration could also improve the district’s effectiveness in the area of finances.				

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Opportunity for Improvement No. 4:

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I, Part A	X	IDEA	X
	Title II, Part A		Career and Technical Education	
	Title III/English Learners		Alternative Programs	
	Title IV, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	
Common Issue				
<p><u>Leadership</u></p> <p>District staff showed inconsistent understanding of program requirements. Furthermore, interviews revealed some district staff are reluctant to change their practices to meet programmatic requirements. This has led to misalignment of efforts and decreased effectiveness in some programs.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<p>As discussed in the “Policies and Procedures” and “Finance” sections, the district should establish internal controls to ensure programmatic and fiscal requirements are met. Attending training is an important internal control. The monitoring teams recommend that district staff attend the federal programs trainings KDE provides. In addition to the program coordinator, the finance officer and superintendent should attend. This will help ensure everyone working with the administration of the programs understands current requirements.</p> <p>As previously discussed, implementing a process to consult with stakeholders – including parents, families, district educators and school principals – on federal programs planning and budgeting would improve communication and the district’s internal controls. The district also should consider establishing advisory committees to engage the community in helping to direct programming.</p>				

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Opportunity for Improvement No. 6:

Programs Addressed <i>(Check all that apply.)</i>	Title I, Part A	X	IDEA	
	Title II, Part A	X	Career and Technical Education	
	Title III/English Learners		Alternative Programs	
	Title IV, Part A	X	Gifted and Talented	
	Title V, Part B		Preschool	
Common Issue <i>(Clearly describe issue as it relates to each program.)</i>				
<p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>The district maintained good communication with KDE monitoring teams. The IDEA teams noted that district special education staff were responsive and thorough in complying with KDE requests before and during the on-site visit. The special education staff sent requested documents in a timely manner. The director of special education was accommodating to the KDE team during the on-site visit by showing a desire to comply with requirements and openness to critical feedback. The Title I and Title II coordinator uploaded evidence before the on-site visit and demonstrated a willingness to cooperate and comply with requirements.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the district’s helpful, timely communication with the monitoring teams, communication within the district and schools was identified as an area for improvement. School principals appear to have very little, if any, input in the determination or usage of their Title I allocations. The coordinator communicates remaining allocation amounts throughout the school year, but the finance officer appears to make many of the decisions about how funds will be spent. Interviews with the Title IV-A monitoring team indicated that school leaders were unaware of the program funds and the implementation of the Title IV-A program. All stakeholders were not consulted in the design and implementation of the Title IV-A application.</p>				
Common Solution(s)/Recommendation(s)				
<p>The school principals indicated they communicate with the Title I coordinator; the KDE monitoring team recommends the district maintain documentation of meetings and conversations with principals about Title I, Part A. The monitoring teams suggest a more coordinated approach to communication that could occur through regularly scheduled meetings between district staff and principals to discuss schools’ needs and to decide which programs can best fund a variety of needs. The KDE monitoring teams suggest all district federal program staff participate in these meetings to coordinate funds and improve communication about ongoing programmatic work.</p> <p>When planning for the next school year, KDE recommends the district work with a variety of stakeholders to discuss school and district needs, goals and strategies, and how funding from various programs will be used to meet needs. Increasing stakeholder involvement in the</p>				

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planning process may increase the effectiveness of strategies and stakeholder buy-in to the plan.

Final Overview

The Middlesboro Independent School District provides a welcoming environment for students and staff. It was apparent the district places a high value on parent and family engagement; the KDE monitoring teams encourage the district to continue to seek ways to increase the involvement of parents and families in the education of their children.

While planning for the upcoming school year, KDE recommends the district assess the effectiveness of current strategies in meeting school and district goals. If current strategies have not helped the schools and district meet performance goals, the district should consider making changes to the plan moving forward. As emphasized throughout this report, the district should increase stakeholder involvement in these discussions.

According to the master schedule submitted to KDE, Middlesboro Alternative School does not appear to be providing students with a 6-hour instructional day as required by KRS 158.060. The class schedule is short 20 minutes of the required 6-hour instructional time. Additionally, interviews with teachers revealed a need for more trauma-informed practices training for all program staff since most students have experienced or are currently experiencing chronic trauma.

While the Title I, Part A monitoring team noted professional learning as a strength and the district provides professional development around PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports), the IDEA monitoring team recommended further professional development in the Foundations Program. Interviews revealed inconsistent implementation of the required annual training requirements for all school staff and the district acknowledged core team training had only been occurring every other year.

The KDE monitoring teams enjoyed visiting the Middlesboro Independent School District and learning about the district's implementation of its programs. We thank the school and district staff for their cooperation with the monitoring teams before, during and after the visit. We hope our feedback helps the district build on the great work that is already being done, and we stand ready to offer further assistance in implementing any of the recommendations contained in this report.