



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**
Teachers College

Better Together:
Muncie Community Schools and Ball State University
Office of Teacher Education Services and Clinical Practice

October 2020

Partnership Perspective

In July 2018, Ball State University and Muncie Community Schools embarked on a historic partnership to transform the city's public school district into a national model for innovative, holistic education. For more information on our partnership with Muncie Community Schools, [click here](#).

As a part of that partnership, President Mearns envisioned the idea that each school would have a liaison embedded into the life of the school. Those liaisons come under the direction of the Office of Teacher Education Services and Clinical Practice. Professional Development School liaisons work with each school's leadership team to implement district-initiated professional development, to act as a thought partner with the school administration, and to act as an effective communicator and conduit of university resources to their school. You may find these liaisons teaching Ball State courses, organizing family nights or leading professional development with teachers. Keep on the lookout for these BSU faculty in the building!



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Did You Know?

Each MCS building has a dedicated Ball State University faculty member who is a liaison to that building. They help to provide district initiated professional development and act as a connection between the school and university. They often help to organize digital tutoring for students at the elementary level through their practicum classes which meet onsite.

Great News at EWA!

Cindy Miller (second grade teacher at East Washington Academy) and **Lynette Varner** (PDS Liaison at East Washington Academy) have been named to the Ball State University Integrated Cultural Committee. They will serve as voices for educators in our area as the committee seeks to increase community engagement and ensure visitors to the campus fully benefit from a wide array of assets available. CONGRATULATIONS!

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Liaison Introduction at North View Dr. Rebecca Brown

Dr. Rebecca Brown is a valued member of the Ball State University Teachers College faculty and has been a Professional Development School Liaison at North View Elementary School for the last three years. She currently resides in Yorktown with her husband, daughters and her dog. She and her husband have been married for 21 years and have lived in Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina and Okinawa, Japan.

In her fifth year at Ball State, she primarily teaches courses in instructional and behavioral engagement, management, and literacy instruction. In addition to her classroom instruction, she does an excellent job of supervising student teachers. Because the students have often had Dr. Brown for coursework, a relationship is already established, and that strong relationship foundation helps if a student teacher struggles. As a PDS liaison, Rebecca is also embedded into the life and culture of North View and that helps student teachers become more quickly acclimated to their placement. Mentor teachers know Rebecca and her presence in the school makes for efficient and effective communication.

“What I enjoy most about the liaison position is working with teachers in the field. It helps keep me grounded with real-time challenges and needs in education. I also enjoy engaging with (K-5) students in a variety of ways throughout the day. I feel honored to be part of the North View family!”



Innovation in Action at South View

Innovation in Education encourages teachers and students to explore, research, and use all kinds of tools to uncover something new or to look at and solve problems in new and different ways. Walking the halls of Muncie Community Schools on any given day, there are so many wonderful educational opportunities. We stopped in at South View Elementary to find *this* great example among many we saw.

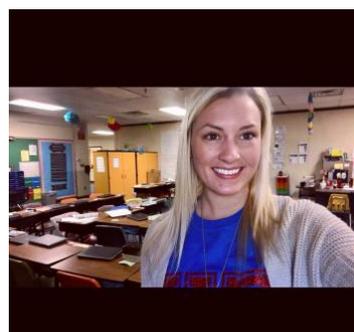
Abby Morrow teaches 5th grade at South View Elementary School. As she watched students listen to directions about writing a book recommendation, she knew there was a better way to engage them in the process. Using the standard directions in her Fountas & Pinnell teacher’s manual, she looked for ways to integrate technology that would enhance the final product and excite students with the medium. Flipgrid is designed to empower students to share their work in a safe, social learning environment. Students still engaged in reading their books and writing their details as they prepared the book talk, but they were highly motivated to record their book talk and share with their classmates via Flipgrid.

“Some of the simplest lessons can be made more engaging and interactive with the use of the technology that is available to us.”

Using Pear Deck, Padlet and other applications, Ms. Morrow keeps the class tuned in to what is being taught as they see their own answers to a math problem pop up on the screen in real time.

“It is so fun to watch those very shy and reticent students really come out of their shell as they share on Flipgrid.”

Thanks for a glimpse at this bit of innovation in action!



Teacher Spotlight at Grissom



Meet **Paul Farr**, 5th grade teacher at Grissom Elementary School. Mr. Farr is a first year teacher and recent graduate of Ball State! Inspired early in life by one of his teachers (shout out to Mrs. Christine Walker of College Park, Georgia), Mr. Farr's dream of following in her footsteps would stay tucked in the back of his mind for many years.

"Mrs. Walker really saw me as an individual and her kindness made school a great escape from a difficult home life and extreme poverty. I really wanted to do the same thing for other young kids that she did for me, but it took me a long time to make that dream come true."

After moving to Muncie from College Park, Georgia, Paul worked in various management fields. Every once in a while, that old dream would resurface and he would think about going to college, but quickly talk himself out of it.

With a child attending school in MCS, Mr. Farr became involved in Longfellow's PTO, volunteered regularly in the school and was challenged by principal Gerry Moore to apply to Ball State to study and prepare to be a teacher. A short time later he did just that. He was accepted as a student and eventually into the teacher education preparation program where he continued to be inspired and challenged by educators like Dixie Denton and Kristin Cipollone in his undergraduate studies.

While not exactly a Muncie native, Muncie is really the spot he wanted to land in as he started his teaching career. In this first year of teaching, Paul is thrilled to be part of the Grissom staff.

"The support at Grissom is wonderful. We are a team and I feel like everyone here wants to see me succeed with my students!"

At this point, he would say that his dream is definitely coming true!

Best thing about teaching: "That AHA! Moment when you see students really GET what you're teaching them!"

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Our Mission:

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.

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