

CALHOUN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT IS A PROUD PARTNER TO MANY COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

We hear more and more of the need to be collaborative and to consolidate programs and services. Sometimes we hear it because it is the right thing to do...sometimes for political reasons or to fulfill another's agenda. Consolidation of services and collaboration is not new to the CISD. In fact, we are on the forefront as an Educational Service Agency working with many of our community partners and other educational entities both locally and regionally on joint initiatives or providing direct services. *Here are a few examples of our partnering at work:*

Early Childhood Education – The CISD, along with its partners county-wide, has been strategically coordinating early childhood initiatives. The goal of this work has been to put everyone together in one spot, at one time, meeting and learning about each other and the programs that are offered. This process has also been looking for gaps and duplication of services.

It appears at this writing that the outcome of this work is going to be significant long-term funding for Early Childhood services in Calhoun County.

School Improvement and Professional Development – CISD has formal arrangements to provide General Education services to Barry and Branch Intermediate School Districts. We have consolidated General Education services and include them as part of our direct services in School Improvement and Professional Development. This has added five more school Districts to the 13 Districts that CISD serves in Calhoun County.

Pupil Accounting – CISD provides pupil accounting services to four other Intermediate School Districts and the Local School Districts that they serve.

The Calhoun Area Career Center – CACC has recently completed additional partnership arrangements with Kellogg Community College and Western Michigan University and we are now offering a 21st Century Aviation Program. Additional partnerships to expand our program offerings are forming including those with Michigan State University.

Michigan Department of Education – CISD is an active partner with the Michigan Department of Education in statewide implementation of programs making the best use of student achievement data to make more informed decisions around School Improvement. The most recent project includes CISD's leading an eight ISD consortium utilizing a new software system to track student progress. This work with the State directly impacts our work with our local districts.

Support for our Local Districts – CISD provides direct services in both the Business Office and Technology. This means instead of local School Districts employing staff they contract with the

CISD to provide those services. Not only does this create efficiencies...but often the districts “purchase” one person and reap the benefits of a full department.

There are more examples that I could give. I share this information with you because what is often noted is what is not being done. Bigger is not always more efficient or cheaper. As long as we are faced with a declining economy we are going to hear the call to collaborate more and to consolidate services. It is important to create efficiencies where they work and explore the possibility until they might.

One thing to consider if the State mandates Collaboration and Consolidation is to take into account the work that has already been done and the great partnerships that have already been formed. There would be nothing worse than making it a shotgun wedding undoing some great work. Everything in its season.

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Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terance Lunger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Terance Lunger, CISD Superintendent