



October 19, 2020—Issue

The Grizzlies Gazette



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Something Profound
When you have gratitude
You can't have an attitude!
From Alena Zachery-Ross



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Office of the Superintendent

Hello everyone, I hope that you and your families are well! As we move towards the holiday season, I would like to remind you to please stay safe. Take care of yourself by wearing face masks and remaining six feet apart from others. Your family and friends need you, our students need you and we need you to be your best so please do what you can to be preventative!

Something Professional

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to the social-emotional needs of our students and families. I continue to hear amazing stories about how individuals have gone above and beyond to support students in ways that certainly go beyond the normal classroom expectations. Your efforts have not gone unnoticed. We certainly appreciate your generosity and kindness.

I would like to remind you that as we prepare to have conversations about moving to the next phase in our Return to Learn Plan, we would like your input. Although we won't be able to meet every person's individual needs and we realize that there will be some disappointment by some and joy by others in any decisions that we make we want to be informed by as many as possible. There is a task force meeting on 10/20/20 at 3:30 pm on [my zoom](#) and there will be an opportunity for all YCS staff to provide input on Friday at 3:00 pm on [my zoom](#) as well. You will have an opportunity to share your thoughts in the break-out rooms and the notes will be recorded and reviewed by the Executive Cabinet. We will utilize this feedback to inform our decisions. We will share these initial thoughts with the Board of Education on Monday, October 26th, and will make final decisions and recommendations by the November 9th Board meeting. We are watching the metrics in our county and in our zip codes each week. We are fortunate that we have had no school-based COVID cases. Thank you to our exceptional Operations staff for keeping the buildings clean and to all of our students and staff for utilizing practices that have kept each of us safe!

Something Personal

This past weekend my family and I visited my son, Cordell, who lives in Grand Rapids. He is the Diversity Recruitment Specialist at Steelcase at Steelcase and is very active in social justice and community engagement in the Grand Rapids area. He is currently featured on several billboards (in both English and Spanish) and buses. The billboards are meant to inspire everyone to vote. I want to encourage each of you to be inspired as well to go out and vote. Please make your voices heard. Fill out your ballots and remember to mail them in. If you would like, early voting has begun as well. You are also welcome to vote in person on

election day. Whichever method you choose, it doesn't matter. What's important is that you make the decision to vote!

Here are a few pics!



Also, I have been behind on my YouTube channel, yet, I still hope you will check me out and subscribe. It should be fun! [Check it out here! Alena Zachery-Ross](#)

Alena Zachery-Ross — Superintendent



Human Resources

COVID-19 Reporting (Important) - During the COVID-19 pandemic it is important that if you receive a call from 734-221-1211 (Sue McCarty) or 248-592-7160 (Alena Zachery-Ross) that you answer the phone or return the call. The Superintendent and I are the points of contact for the Washtenaw County Health Department. Remember all actual or potential COVID-19 exposures **must be reported directly** to Human Resources or

the Superintendent. You can call the numbers indicated above or email at smccarty3@ycschools.us or to the Superintendent at azacheryross7@ycschools.us. The Washtenaw Community Health Department has partnered with all Washtenaw County Schools to have a universal reporting system for potential or actual cases along with other COVID-19 related issues. In addition, contact your building administrator or department director **immediately** to report any COVID-19 related issues.

Reporting Absences and Substitute Requests - Reporting absences is **mandatory** and an expectation of each employee. You **must** report all absences in AESOP including **daily absences and extended medical leaves**. If you need assistance with AESOP please email Lois Nowling at LNowling5@ycschools.us. Please do not request a substitute until you have consulted your building administrator.

Medical Leaves and substitute Requests - Medical leaves whether short or long term must have a doctor's note when submitted for approval to Human Resources. A doctor's note must also be submitted **prior to your return** directly to Human Resources. It is imperative that you DO NOT request a substitute unless directed by the building administrator when reporting an absence. The process of not requesting a substitute is new and temporary for the 2020-21 school year. The process is subject to change as we phase in return to school or need to step back to Phase 3.

The Emergency Family Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) and Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) requests from staff will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. There are 6 qualifying events for the EPSLA. Three (3) of the qualifying events will allow 100% of pay up to a legislated daily amount. The second 3 options allow for 2/3 pay up to a legislated daily amount. EFMLEA has only 1 qualifying event which is directly related to minor children. Not all requests for leave will qualify under EPSLA or EFMLEA. The total amount of time you can be compensated for both leaves cannot exceed 12 weeks or 480 eligible hours combined. You must have been employed for a minimum of 30 days with YCS to qualify. Please remember that the time taken during the March-June shut down counts as part of your total of 12 weeks. Human Resources will be in contact with each individual currently on leave as they begin to expire as early October. Once your leave expires you are expected to return to work. If you cannot return to work, you must contact Human Resources. Failure to contact Human Resources may result in job abandonment. The legislation that allows the two leave options (EPSLA and EFMLEA) is scheduled to conclude on December 31, 2020.

Mandatory Meaningful work assignments are mandatory assignments. You must be available during your regular work hours in order to be paid. Failure to report to meaningful assignments will result in a loss of wages.

Open Enrollment - MESSA - Open Enrollment will be **November 2-20, 2020**. This is especially important to those members who have Pak E. **Pak E** members please remember from our earlier communication that Pak E **will not** be available after December 31, 2020. You must make a select from our active Pak options. We have four Pak options available: Pak A, D, C and F. Open enrollment will once again be on-line. Expect to receive information and instructions from Human Resources in late October.

Criminal Convictions - If you are arrested any time during your employment with YCS, you **must report** any and all convictions to Human Resources. Please remember when you were fingerprinted during your hiring process and that these prints are in the State Police System. Whenever an arrest occurs, the State Police communicate to the Michigan Department of Education. The Michigan Department of Education will report your conviction to the District to take action. The District will review each case individually to determine whether or not further action is necessary. Failure to report convictions may lead to further disciplinary action.

You must **check your email** at least 2 times per day; this is a mandatory requirement. If you are experiencing difficulties with your email please contact technology support at techsupport@ycschools.us.

“Hold the vision, trust the process.” – Unknown

Sue McCarty — Human Resources Director



**SAVING
LIVES**

“Self-compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others.” —Christopher Germer



Student Support Services

Virtual trips to the apple orchard, imaginary haunted houses, and petting virtual animals have all added to our learning at home experiences! We are so fortunate to have the opportunities to still be actively engaged and learning during these different times.

We have met with several staff groups and the whole Student Support Services department. We continue to check in to make sure we're all doing okay and that we are continuing to be creative, flexible, and attuned to our students' needs as well as our own.

IEP's and other compliance requirements are on-going and remain a high priority for our staff. Compensatory Learning Plans (CLP's) have been developed for students who may require them due to their current learning environment. to do to become the representative. We need a parent voice at the county level and would love to hear from you.

E. Ruth Jordan — Student Support Services Director

Statewide Field Team (SWFT): Blueprint Installation

Our partnership between YCS and the Statewide Field Team continues in the 20-21 school year. During our partnership, this year, we will work together to provide professional learning, technical assistance and support focused on a systems based approach to continuous improvement through the *Blueprint Framework*.

We look forward to working together to support YCS in meeting the #1 Top Priority Goal:

To substantially improve the quality of teaching and learning and thereby significantly advance the learning for all YCS students. We will accomplish this by ensuring that all:

- YCS staff will advance the learning and achievement of all students by making significant strides in **improving the quality of instruction** in all of our classrooms by teaching the priority standards and following the curriculum outlined in our pacing guides.
- YCS staff will conceive firmly and in substantial detail **what good teaching looks like and sounds like**.
- YCS staff will take the **measure of the quality of instruction** against this yardstick, and will work relentlessly to move the quality of instruction forward using formative assessments.

Sarah Scott, — SWFT Coordinator of Professional Learning
(Ypsilanti Community Schools)
scotts@calhounisd.org

Instructional Technology Parent & Student Tech Tutorials

As a school district, we want to provide our families and students with every opportunity to learn. By providing all students with a device we have enabled students and teachers to collaborate more seamlessly than ever before, connect through mediums that are most conducive to the lesson at hand, and learn together as never before. We hope the tutorials and other resources on this page will help you navigate the myriad of resources and tools now available for you.

Parent & Student Resource Page for Remote Learning

<https://www.ycschools.us/academics/parent--student-resource-for-remote-learning/>

OFFICE HOURS

Mondays—1:00—2:00 pm — meet.google.com/uex-ajdz-wst

Tuesdays — 4:00—5:00 pm — meet.google.com/uex-ajdz-wst

Wednesdays — 7:30—8:30 am — meet.google.com/uex-ajdz-wst



Technology

Hello YCS, I need to make a correction from the last newsletter on pickup days. I incorrectly reported that Tuesdays and Wednesdays were the scheduled pickup days and instead, it is actually Tuesdays and Thursdays. Apologies on that! Distribution does continue weekly and here are the latest numbers:

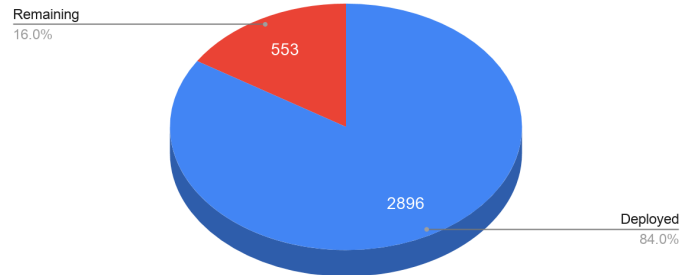
We finally have additional iPads in; so if you are aware of a family that we owe an iPad to, please let us know at techsupport@ycschools.us. We estimate up to 70 families that we owe an iPad to; more specifically we have families that we gave Chromebooks to until we had more iPads available to hand out, and we will be formally contacting them soon.

We have received an influx of charger replacements from students who have either a.) destroyed theirs or b.) lost them. Please be aware that we will replace these adapters once, and beyond that, the family will have to purchase a replacement. Unfortunately these items are not cheap as they cost from \$45 to \$60 to replace. Please encourage your students to responsibly maintain their loaned devices owned by the district. We have a very limited number of replacements available.

“Technology alone isn’t going to improve student achievement. The best combination is great teachers working with technology to engage students in the pursuit of the learning they need.” -Arne Duncan

Nik Jackson — Technology Director

Ypsilanti Community Schools



Washtenaw County Writing Center

The Washtenaw County Writing Center for Secondary Students (WCWC) is proud to announce the first installment of their brand new “Spotlight Series: Imagining a Different Future Together Through Writing” on October 27, 2020 at 6:00pm.

We’re so excited to share that our first event will feature Dr. Antero Garcia, an internationally known teacher and scholar, in an interactive presentation on writing and youth activism. A former English teacher at a public high school in South Central, Los Angeles, Antero Garcia is now an assistant professor at Stanford University. He studies how technology and gaming shape youth learning, literacy practices, and civic identities. His recent book--*Good Reception: Teens, Teachers, and Mobile Media in a Los Angeles High School*—is an ethnographic look at technology and gaming in an urban high school. He has also written about youth participatory action research (*Doing Youth Participatory Action Research: Transforming Inquiry with Researchers, Educators, and Students* with Nicole Mirra and Ernest Morrell) and teacher advocacy (*Everyday Advocacy: Teachers Who Change the Literacy Narrative* (with Cathy Fleischer).

We welcome students, teachers and community members from across Washtenaw County to join in this conversation with Antero. You can register for the event [here](#). Please feel free to share this information with any others you feel may be interested in joining as well.

In addition, you can follow updates from the WCWC on our website (www.washtenawwc.org) or on our various social media platforms:

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/washtenawwc/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WashtenawWC>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WashtenawWC/>

If you have any questions, please contact us at washtenawwc@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you on October 27th!



“Indeed, learning to write may be part of learning to read.
For all I know, writing comes out of a superior devotion to reading.”
— Eudora Welty





Facilities

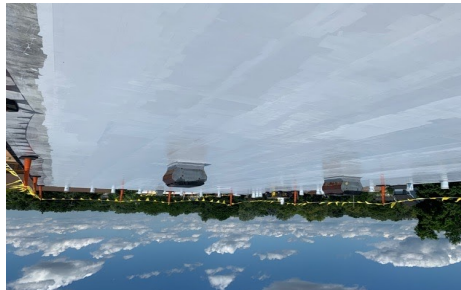
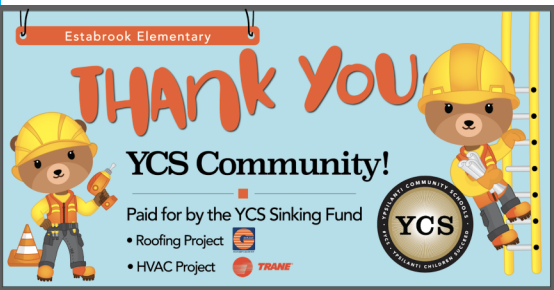
Did you know?

On November 6th, 2018, the YCS community voted YES on a Sinking Fund Proposal. Linked [here](#) is a story that WEMU ran in October of 2018. Our sinking fund will afford us approximately 3.9 million dollars a year for each of the 10 years. Our first fiscal year for the sinking fund began July 2019. Sinking Funds can only be utilized for allowable sinking fund expenditures under the Michigan Department of Treasury, Determination Letters linked [here](#). Under current law, **sinking funds** can be used only for the purchase of real estate for sites, for the construction or repair of school buildings, acquiring or installing technology infrastructure, and the retirement of bonded debt.

The YCS Board of Education (BOE) and Superintendent Zachery-Ross, has formed several BOE subcommittees to develop a strategic plan around the use of the Sinking Fund dollars. With the support of our Superintendent, the YCS Facilities Department has made numerous recommendations to the subcommittees and the greater board. With the approval of the YCS Board of Education, we have completed some tremendous improvement and safety related projects district wide. The purpose of every project is to improve and ensure the safety, security and comfort of our students and staff and to support the mission and vision of our district.

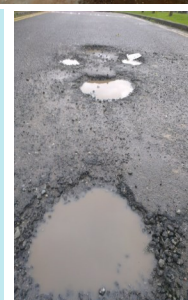
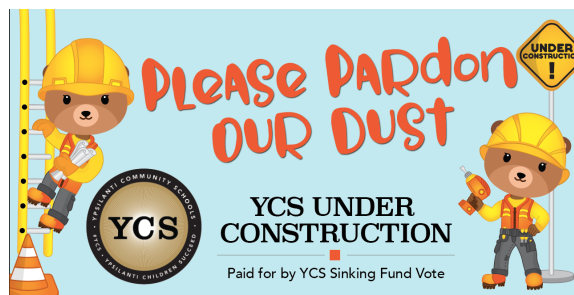
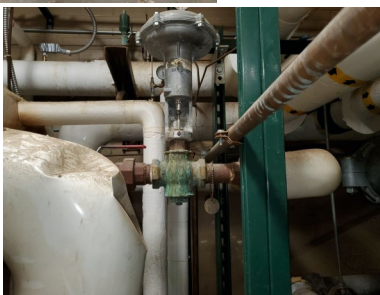
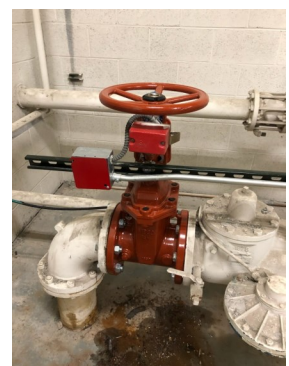
Some of the major projects completed during year one of our sinking fund include replacement of several sections of roof on WiHi/WIMA, the restoration of the all roof sections at Estabrook. This restoration project included the application of White, fluid applied, Polyurethane. We also developed a safety plan to address necessary improvements to our fire suppression and fire safety systems throughout the district. Without the YCS Sinking Fund, these costs would have had a direct and substantial impact on the general budget and ultimately our educational systems. Below you will find some images captured through the 2019-2020 operational year that showcase some of these projects.

Sinking Fund publicity signage is being placed throughout the district. We have recently placed "Pardon Our Dust" signage in several locations. We will be installing "Thank You" signage at Estabrook, Perry and WiHi/WIMA for the roofing and HVAC work completed there. The Technology Department will be also working with Taryn to thank the community for supporting the One to One tech device initiative through the sinking fund.



The community for supporting the One to One tech device initiative through the sinking fund.

The Sinking Fund Schedule and Priorities including:
Roofing, Paving, HVAC, Safety, Technology and Other Qualifying Projects



We Are YCS!

Aaron Rose — Director of District Operations



Communications Department

October is National Principals Month, and Ypsilanti Community Schools would like to thank our principals for their hard work and dedication to the district! Please join us in saying thank you!
In appreciation for your hard wo

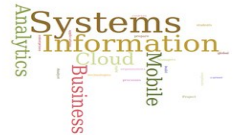
rk and dedication to the district as staff, the YCS administration will have a **special virtual jazz event on Friday, November 6th at 7 p.m.** Detroit duo **Gwen and Chuck Scales** will give us a night of jazz entertainment for you to enjoy. Please join us with your family and a beverage of your choice for a fun, relaxing evening. More information is to come regarding the link and RSVP.

Taryn Willis — Marketing and Communications Coordinator



Business Office

As you have heard by now, the Governor has signed the budget for the 2020-2021 school year. The budget protects schools, colleges, universities, and local governments from any state funding reductions below their original 2020 funding levels. The budget also includes new education investments focused on providing students, teachers, and adults across Michigan with needed resources, including:



- \$161 million in flexible per pupil spending to help districts address the increased costs of educating students in the midst of a pandemic.
- \$30 million for the Michigan Reconnect program to provide a tuition-free pathway for adults looking to upskill and earn a postsecondary certificate or associate degree. Implementing Reconnect will help close the skills gap and move the state closer to reaching 60% postsecondary educational attainment by 2030.
- \$5.6 million for mental health counselors to assist children in schools across Michigan with mental health needs.
- \$5 million in incentives to attract and retain first-year teachers in districts across Michigan.
- An increase of \$5.7 million to continue to fund literacy coaches and expand resources to improve training for other educators in best practices of literacy learning.
- \$2 million in additional support to assist vulnerable students who are learning remotely, including special education students, students who are chronically absent, and children in need of childcare while their parents are working.
- \$2 million for Detroit Public TV to foster early childhood initiatives to enhance learning and early education.
- Implementation of previously announced teacher hazard payments of up to \$500 per teacher, along with the addition of payments of up to \$250 for school support staff.
- \$1 million for school meal debt forgiveness.

We will receive the first state aid payment on October 20 which will confirm what all these budget changes means for YCS.

In the meantime, our auditors have finished our financial review and they will present it to the board during the upcoming Board meeting.

“With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

Priya Nayak — Director of Business and Finance



“We are all storytellers. We all live in a network of stories. There isn’t a stronger connection between people than storytelling.”

—Jimmy Neil Smith





Food Service

Our Grab and Go bus program is off and running. We were able to deliver more than 1,400 meals to our students. We are working with transportation to adjust locations and times. Please check out the website for the most up to date information.

Apple Crunch Day was celebrated on Wednesday, October 7 at Estabrook Elementary. Students were provided with “apple themed” treat bags.



We Are Stronger Together!!!!!!
Tiffany Houston — Director of Food Services

Transportation

Thank you to our Maintenance Department for the VIZPIN installation. If you haven't please download the VIZPIN app on your cell phone. Please email me if you need the app or have questions. This is a free app- once installed and you have been granted access, with a simple swipe on your smartphone you will be able to gain keyless access to the transportation building.



Regarding the Washtenaw County Health Questionnaire-this is required and necessary for entering a YCS building. This information may be needed to trace and notify you in the event of COVID exposure.

Great partnership with Food Service. Week 2 for “Grab N Go” bus routes bringing school breakfasts and lunches to school age students not able to get to one of the distribution sites. I thank you for your continued patience as we assign meaningful work. We have staff assisting in positions outside transportation. Many times the requests for additional support come when they come.

All transportation staff please continue checking your district email. It is recommended that you do this at least twice a day. If you cannot access your district email, please let me know so that we can request your password be reset.

Kim Searcy — Director of Transportation

Grants



The fall represents an opportunity for our schools to update our families on our Title I plans. Schools are required to engage parents in the planning process. We will have to be creative in how we engage families. Zoom, YouTube, Google Meet, and voice over PowerPoints are a few options to involve families and get out great information. Research and our experience tell us that students do better when families are engaged. It is not always easy to get families involved and yet it is critical that we make every effort to do so. It is helpful to take out the education jargon as we communicate. As my dad used to tell me, “Put it where the goats can get it”. Our families are smart and eliminating the “education speak” will invite our families to engage with us.

Mark Coscarella — Director of State and Federal Grant Programs



Office of the Assistant Superintendent

Thank you for all you did last week to prepare for Count Day. Your efforts are truly appreciated! We know that we must continue to be committed and flexible as we learn about new mandates, processes, and procedures that have come along with Pandemic Learning.

As we have preliminarily reviewed the student count numbers, we are significantly down in students across the district. This is where we need you. First, we need to ensure that all students are safe and accounted for, next we need to ensure all students are receiving a quality education this year, and lastly, we need to ensure that we receive the appropriate state funding for the students that we serve. Therefore, we are implementing the following plan to ensure that these objectives are met. Please contact your Building Administrators for further assistance or clarification if needed.

We're all in this together... We are collectively responsible for ALL students... We are STRONGER TOGETHER... We ARE YCS!!!

Teacher's Role & Expectations:

- Work closely with your Administrative Assistant to ...
- ensure every student has a D1 that's active on their roster by 4pm on October 12, 2020
- your first interaction with the student should be a D1
- in the attendance comment, input the "actual" interaction code
- contact parents and/or students to ensure they are connecting during live sessions (for remote and in-person teachers)
- contact parents and/or students to submit assignments create on or after Count Day (for fully online teachers)
- track students who only have EL (email), PH (phone) or IM (instant messaging) interactions once a week for four weeks.
 - **WEEK 1: STARTS:** Wednesday October 7 – **ENDS:** October 13, 2020
 - **WEEK 2: STARTS:** Wednesday October 14 – **ENDS:** October 20, 2020
 - **WEEK 3: STARTS:** Wednesday October 21 – **ENDS:** October 27, 2020
 - **WEEK 4: STARTS:** Wednesday October 28 – **ENDS:** November 3, 2020

Principal's Role & Expectations:

- Work closely with your Administrative Assistant to ...
- ensure teachers are taking attendance in a timely manner
- assist in obtaining information from other buildings when students are remotely enrolled
- ensure teachers are verifying monthly attendance
- teachers have the means to communicate with their families and provide support when they assistance in reaching students and/or their families
- help to coordinate efforts between administrative assistants and other professional staff from the district in reaching out to our families

Administrative Assistant Role & Expectations:

- Work closely with your Building Level Leader to ...
- have an accurate roster of all students in the building
- complete Count Day forms from Tami with accuracy
- Work closely with your Teachers to ...
- ensure attendance is submitted in a timely manner every day
- ensure monthly attendance is verified and submitted
- Work closely with Community Liaisons to ...
- follow up with students who have no interactions with teachers
- follow up with students who were absent on Count Day to get them into a live session as soon as possible
- follow up with students who only had a EL, PH, or IM attendance on or since Count Day (use the document provided by Solomon Zheng as a reference and verify with administrative assistants)

Looking at the data from PowerSchool

1. **Priority:** confirm that the no D1s on this are actually No D1s. Work with the teachers to ensure that there actually was no contact prior to Count. Remember, before Count Day any of the codes (F2F, FF, EL, PH, IM, RLP, CA, etc...) **all count as a D1**. On the D1 screen, it tries to show all of the codes that could have potentially been submitted for the student so it should be pretty easy to identify if a teacher had submitted a present code but just forgot to put in the D1.



SAVING LIVES



Office of the Assistant Superintendent

2. Check that the "no show" list is consistent with your no-show lists. These are students who had **zero attendance codes** submitted on Count Day. Please make sure something is submitted for the student whether present or absent.

3. All of the students on the 2 Way on Count need to be put on your teacher's absence tracking. All of these students are considered "excused absent" and need to be tracked over the next 30 calendar days. If they receive a FF, F2F, CA, or RLP before **November 5th** then they are considered Present for Count and marked as returned on the absence tracker. For YCMS, ACTech and STEMM, you have an additional 2-Way on Count because of your A/B rotation schedule.

4. Present on Count: these students should match all the students from your teacher lists. Notice the "total" column. This should match the expected number of attendance submissions per student: elementary = 2 (AM, PM) and secondary = 6 or 7. For YCMS, ACTech and STEMM, you have an additional Present on Count because of your A/B rotation schedule.

Community Liaison's Role & Expectations:

- Work closely with your Administrative Assistant to ...
- **Priority 1: For students Dropped but had an interaction with the Community Liaison, Counselor, Para, or District Professional**
 - If you had an interaction with a student (about course work) and the student was dropped prior to October 7, 2020. No Show. But if you can identify your first interaction with a D1. We can then get them into a live session or complete an assignment they can be counted by November 3, 2020
 - If student decides to return to YCS...the teacher notifies the secretary who will turn the student back on (powerschool) and the teacher enters the D1
 - Elem (AM/PM)
 - Secondary (for every period)
- **Priority 2: Students with ZERO Attendance Codes since Count Day- Any student absent on Count Day (October 7, 2020)** They have to be present at least one day within the next 30 calendar days starting October 8, 2020.
 - These students have had zero interactions with teachers since count days or completed any assignments.
 - The Best way is to have Zero students connect with one live session or complete an assignment.
- **Priority 3: Students with only a D1, EL, IM, or PH code on Count Day**
 - We need to have one (1) interaction per week for (4) weeks.
 - Here are the dates:
 - WEEK 1: STARTS: Wednesday October 7 – ENDS: Tuesday, October 13, 2020
 - WEEK 2: STARTS: Wednesday October 14 – ENDS: Tuesday, October 20, 2020
 - WEEK 3: STARTS: Wednesday October 21 – ENDS: Tuesday, October 27, 2020
 - WEEK 4: STARTS: Wednesday October 28 – ENDS: Tuesday, November 3, 2020

“Self-care is not a waste of time; self-care makes your use of time more sustainable.” —Jackie Viramontez

SAVE LIVES
IT'S WHAT WE DO

Watch for our next issue!

