



**Mason County Promise Zone Board  
Special Meeting  
2020 Board Training and Visioning Session Agenda  
Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 5:00-7:00 PM  
Ludington & Scottville Area Chamber of Commerce, 5300 W US 10, Ludington, MI**

Members Present: Jason Kennedy\*, Fabian Knizacky\*, Andrea Large, Jim McLean, Ed Makowicki, Annette Quillan, Monica Schuyler, Amy Pepper, Kathy Surd, Dena Thurston

Members Absent: Roger Nash

Staff Present: Jody Maloney, Brandy Miller

1. Call to Order: Monica Schuyler called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM
2. Limited Public Comment: None
3. Approval of the Agenda: Motion by McLean, Supported by Knizacky; Motion carried 10-0-1
4. Special Meeting Business
  - a. Board Training: Brandy Henderson, President & CEO of the Ludington & Scottville Area Chamber of Commerce presented on a version of Board roles and responsibilities that the Promise Zone might consider for future Board Member orientations. Kennedy suggested language changes would be necessary in light of the Promise Zone being a Public Body with "Officers," rather than an "Executive Committee." Maloney will adjust the language in the document in case the Board wishes to consider its use at a future time.
  - b. Board Visioning Session: Maloney conducted a "visioning session" to help the Board determine its goals for the next five years. \*Knizacky left the meeting at 5:50PM.
  - c. Board Training
    - i. Open Meetings Act: Eric Smith, Mason County District Library Director, shared the basics of the Open Meetings Act for Public Boards.
    - ii. FOIA: Smith shared the basics of FOIA for Public Boards. \*Kennedy left the meeting at 7:00 PM
5. Any Other Business: None
6. Limited Public Comment: None
7. **Adjourn: The meeting was moved for adjournment at 7:10 PM with a motion by Surd.**



**THE MASON COUNTY PROMISE BELIEVES IN A PROMISING FUTURE FOR ALL.**

**The Mason County Promise Zone also holds these GUIDING PRINCIPLES for our work:**

HOPE; OPPORTUNITY; DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS AND GROWTH OF THE PROMISE; INTENTIONAL FUNDRAISING FOR A SUSTAINABLE PROMISE; UNITY; KNOWLEDGE OF CAREER AND COLLEGE OPTIONS; COHESIVENESS; OPTIMISM; GOOD LEADERSHIP AND PROMISE ZONE PROMINENCE

**In the next five years, we PROMISE:**

- **To focus on middle school students and strongly support them toward further education.**
  - The guiding principle for this area is HOPE
  - Seven board members feel energized and passionate about this vision
- **To increase the number of students who complete their program of study.**
  - The guiding principle for this area is OPPORTUNITY
  - Four board members feel energized and passionate about this vision
- **To reinforce that college is a viable option for personal development of all of Mason County's students, and a pathway to the future success of all of Mason County.**
  - The guiding principle for this area is DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS & GROWTH OF THE PROMISE
  - Three board members feel energized and passionate about this vision
- **To grow in a sustainable manner, while increasing student success and post-secondary attainment that results in economic sustainability and personal fulfillment.**
  - The guiding principle for this area is AN INTENTIONAL, SUSTAINABLE PROMISE
  - Three board members feel energized and passionate about this vision
- **To help students develop strong life skills, confidence in self, and a belief that their community supports them.**
  - The guiding principle for this area is UNITY
  - Three board members feel energized and passionate about this vision
- **To increase the skills of our workforce through partnering with area businesses and educational institutions.**
  - The guiding principle for this area is KNOWLEDGE OF COLLEGE AND CAREER OPTIONS
  - Two board members feel energized and passionate about this vision
- **To foster a strong reputation for success as a result of a well-developed marketing plan, highlighting opportunity for all.**
  - The guiding principle for this area is COHESIVENESS
  - One board member feels energized and passionate about this vision
- **To make college attainable for all students, conveyed through retention and completion rates.**
  - The guiding principle for this area is OPTIMISM
  - One board member feels energized and passionate about this vision
- **To provide a consistent message between all partners, inclusive of all post-secondary opportunities.**
  - The guiding principle for this area is GOOD LEADERSHIP AND PROMISE ZONE PROMINENCE
  - One board member feels energized and passionate about this vision



Up until now, what have been our strengths and successes in the following areas? (To follow is a full transcript of all handwritten notes)

#### **STUDENTS, YOUTH, CHILDREN, TEENS, OR FUN**

**We are guided by HOPE.**

- Students seem to have optimism and enthusiasm for their academic futures
- High rates of return and achievement (relative to other community colleges)
- Making a way for students that previously didn't think they had a college opportunity
- Some early Promise Scholars "volunteering" for us
- High application rates
- More children thinking about attending college
- Participating in Friday Night Live was a fun way to increase awareness

#### **GROWTH, STRENGTH, OPPORTUNITY, FAMILIES, OR THE PROMISE ZONE BOARD**

**We are guided by OPPORTUNITY.**

- Strong start, but lots of opportunities still, moving forward
- Good first year cohort size, given short timeframe, and [a] large 2<sup>nd</sup> year jump
- Big opportunity for our families to assure success
- [Increase] in 2<sup>nd</sup> student cohort
- Huge support for families in helping their children get a college education
- Awesome board members (dedicated, knowledgeable, and success-driven)
- We have started conversations about working on success skills—could be our trademark
- Building of committee's experience
- Financial strength from fundraising
- Good growth in SET funding
- Growth in number of people taking advantage of Promise

#### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, LEARNING, WISDOM, OR POLICY**

**We are guided by DEVELOPMENT and GROWTH.**

- Great to have a coordinator who represents us well
- Knowledge that the Promise is available
- Promise Scholar pride: I can; I was supported
- Life skills; Helping others to take responsibility
- Educated community on college paths and FAFSA
- More people gaining knowledge about FAFSA
- More students get post k-12 education
- We are wiser than we were two years ago
- Board has learned and adapted as needed, successfully
- Cohesive nature of board members—lots of assets
- Worth, value and community involvement



## **FINANCES, MONEY, DONORS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, OR BUDGET**

**We are guided by INTENTION and SUSTAINABILITY.**

- Early saturation of students applying
- Quick and successful fundraiser for a rural community
- Supportive donors with long-term sustainability opportunities
- Have benefit of well-funded early Promise Zone
- The speed by which the donations from the community came in
- Strong list of Founder's Fund members that acted quickly to donate money
- Coordinated process and got word out in a very short time
- Raised money locally to get [the Promise Scholarship] started in a very short time
- Increasing taxable value growth in community ensures a few years of [increasing] SET capture
- Private [money] raised well exceeds [money] needed to support two years
- Excessive cash on hand because of donors
- Set capture currently exceed [money] needed to provide scholarship
- Dedicated board
- Generous funding
- Good collaboration with WSCC
- Community engagement

## **ASSISTANCE, COMMUNITY NEEDS, TEACHERS, HELPFULNESS, OR COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

**We are guided by UNITY.**

- Schools have supported the Promise opportunities
- Partners include WSCC, Foundations, County, K-12 Schools, Chamber & Donors
- Developed relationships with Promise Zone Association and Treasury
- Building the knowledge and skill base of the community
- Natural partnership between WSCC and local schools
- Conversations around student success and collaborative work is growing
- The Promise has helped stimulate college questions
- Value of a continuing education, even if plan A doesn't work—still value!

## **CAREERS, WORK, LIFE PATH, PROFESSION, OR RESPONSIBILITY**

**We are guided by KNOWLEDGE OF COLLEGE AND CAREER OPTIONS.**

- Giving a broader career path to students and increasing earning power
- Several scholars shared their stories how [the] Promise helped [them] on their path
- We help students jumpstart their career path
- Making sure WSCC careers are well known
- The Promise has broadened the opportunities for students, making them dream about their futures



## **WELL-BEING, EDUCATION, HEALTH, SCHOOLS, OR ACHIEVEMENT**

### **We are guided by COHESIVENESS.**

- Stressed [that college] is for everyone!
- Opportunity for all to go to college
- Local school districts are anxious to support this vision!
- Kids work hard to achieve GPA needed ("Bubble" kids)
- WSCC enrollment [is up] when national trend is [down]
- Gave students the opportunity with only a 2.0 GPA
- Belief that all can succeed and a desire to make sure it happens

## **CONNECTEDNESS, RELATIONSHIPS, DIVERSITY, COLLABORATION & COMMITTEES**

### **We are guided by OPTIMISM.**

- Building relationships with WSCC and local schools
- Ability to usually listen, open-minded to all opinions and viewpoints (continued on next page...)
- Have a board that works well together
- Board [is] well-connected in the community and beyond
- Seem to have buy-in from the players at high schools and WSCC
- Integrating with LCAN and Kickstart and Student Success
- Good collaboration with Community Foundation, WSCC, K-12 Schools, Mason County, & Chamber
- Cohesive board
- Relationship with WSCC

## **VISIBILITY, FAME, LEADERSHIP, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, OR REPUTATION**

### **We are guided by GOOD LEADERSHIP and PROMISE ZONE PROMINENCE**

- Having Jason [Kennedy] to lead
- Community support and pride
- Yard signs/realtors using the to bring more people to our community
- Leaders in the community believe in the Promise
- Infiltrating the high school and elementary
- Canvassing the community
- Becoming a household name
- Too early to have significant reputation
- Big banners are visible
- Promise in now a recognizable term
- Good positive media thus far
- Widespread awareness of the Promise
- Students who wouldn't have gone to college are going, as reported by them
- Hired staff: Promise coordinator



What goal do you have that advances our Promise Zone toward “a promising future for all”? What age group or educational stage should we focus on the most in the next five years?

- Build in supports and touchpoints beginning and through [school] at regular intervals to remove barriers for successful completion.
- [Develop a] culture of the importance of education and understanding the return value.
- Focus on middle and high school to show opportunity and pathways for all.
- Middle school [students create a] short life journal as part of [an] Educational Development Plan.
- 98% success for Promise Scholars.
- Focus on all ages by integrating continuum of programs that integrate and promote college going culture (Kickstart, LCAN, Career Awareness, Promise, etc.).
- A higher level of education that leads to a higher standard of living in the community--We should target all age groups but concentrate on grades 6-12 who could take advantage of the Promise in the next five years.
- Focus on elementary so eventually it is part of their life goal.
- To clarify the school of choice students to requesting the Promise Scholarship. Maybe we could give them a percentage of the scholarship for years in the school system, much like other Promise Zones. Or, we should work with neighboring Promise Zones to work with a solution for these students. Or, maybe we need to be “tough” and say “sorry,” find other scholarships. Sometimes I feel we need to be tough and stick to the rules. We need these guidelines.
- Focus on current middle schoolers and 9<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Middle schoolers to lay academic foundation and to be successful and [to develop a] clear understanding of available avenues.
- Grow access by increasing Promise Zone students who enroll, but also improve completion rate.
- Create student led success mentoring program; 2<sup>nd</sup> year students mentor 1<sup>st</sup> year students.
- Make sure students using Promise dollars have the other supports necessary to be successful.

What is a goal you have for Promise participant growth or involvement? In five years, what result do you most want from our student success programming?

- All students who use Promise dollars achieve certificate and/or degree.
- Expand to other institutions—impact more students.
- Increase the [number] of students who complete their program.
- 98% of Promise Scholars achieve a successful conclusion to their WSCC experience in 5 years
- Participant growth should be determined by need, not by a goal number
- 100% of students will use the Promise.
- To have all high school graduates to be able to enroll in college classes without taking pre-requisites or remedial classes. Student success can work with the high schools.
- Home schooled graduates need to have a measured level of competence to start college successfully. If the board feels it is not necessary to [require] home schooled students to take a GED, then this student should pay for one semester at the partnering institution and maintain a 2.0 GPA before applying for the Promise.
- Mentorship and support system [in place] for High School and first year college students.
- 80% Promise Scholarship use by High School grads.
- The past students are mentors.



What shared experiences should all Promise Scholars have? Apart from an educational credential, what would you like for every Promise Scholar to walk away from their Promise experience with?

- Strong use of data to help influence decisions (policy).
- All promise scholars earn a credential, degree, etc. before exhausting use of all Promise funds.
- I would hope there would be a sense of pride and appreciation for the skills obtained and the possibilities now available.
- Ability [for Scholars] to self-sustain and provide for their family financially.
- Access to information and support throughout [a Scholar's] college experience and beyond.
- Understanding of value placed in good work ethic and life skills by employers, friends, and mates.
- Knowing the people of Mason County care and support the education of all students.
- That a community is behind [Promise Scholars/Students].
- Appreciation for work ethic and life skills.
- Confidence in [student's own] ability to be successful.
- Confidence, direction and passion for [a student's] next step.

What is your vision or goal for using the Promise funds beyond their current use? What will change in Mason County if our funding is used successfully?

- Mason County will improve its workforce and improve its quality of citizen and quality of life.
- Promise funds to be used for housing, childcare, food and healthcare.
- The Promise has additional "Partnering Institutions."
- Use funds to focus on student success.
- Improve credential attainment.
- Supporting student success with mentors.
- Make better use of opportunities [that are] not yet developed: summer learning, college mentors...
- Expanding the program and student supports to other colleges.
- Build in supports to help students complete their program.
- Current use—tuition and student success: [we] should not consider using funds beyond current until we reach success with our local college, WSCC.
- 98% successful completion, [defined as] transfers, associate degree, certificates, license, sustainable employment, or positive redirection in life.
- Four-year degree and apprenticeship [covered].
- Promise funds should only be used for Mason County students.
- We should look at expanding to other institutions if there is an educational or technical value for the students.
- Financial responsibility [so that the Promise Zone does] not compromise our financial position; always be in a position to offer [money] for all eligible students in Mason County.
- Part of Mason County pride: [ex:] why I want to be raised in Mason county and how Mason County raised me.
- This is a five-year goal to "Pay It Forward." Let our Promise [Scholars] get established and ask them to donate to help others for scholarships and possible setting an account to help with other living expenses.
- Create a college-going culture.
- Access to opportunity for all.



What is one thing that you want all of Mason County to understand about going to college?

- [College] is the next life step (possibly most critical) to advance one's self-worth and prepare [students] for gainful employment. It is clearly not an end in itself, but an early positive life step.
- [College] is possible for everyone and college includes two-year, four-year, trade, apprenticeship and certificate programs.
- A higher education level will produce a higher skill level, which will lead to a higher standard of living.
- College isn't for everyone but it's a great place to start if [a person is] undecided.
- [Students will] pick a career [they] love and work hard to be the best at it.
- [College] is possible [and] resources are available.
- Every high school grad has the opportunity to go beyond High School Education.

What impact do you want the Promise Scholarship to have on our local workforce or economy?

- To encourage and promote all residents of Mason County to be able to have the necessary tools, to have the education and technical skills to be gainfully employed with the necessary job and life skills. Thus, this will increase their standard of living in Mason County.
- Fulfill community needs.
- Challenge students for new adventures using local resources.
- Mason County [becomes] a desirable place to live and work, and a place for opportunity for students and [for] careers.
- Increase the skills of people [and the] workforce in our community.
- Support local workforce and build opportunities for well-paying remote careers which continue to enhance the county's economic status.
- Increase the skill level of the county to attract business.
- [Increase] employment.
- Connect business and community needs to training and credentialing at WSCC, so schools feed WSCC, which feeds local employers.
- Substantial impact—not allowing scholars to fail will be the enhancer.
- We need to get our local economy to be a willing partner—coordinate their local employment needs with courses, program, etc. at WSCC and partnering institutions.
- Work to involve scholars in [local] businesses through internships, job shadowing, field trips, school presentations, career fairs, summer jobs, etc.

What kind of regional/statewide achievement should the Promise Zone aim for? What is one goal you have for the Promise to help grow/expand/improve college-going culture in Mason County?

- Increase early awareness, college planning and goal setting.
- To be a model of what can be done at the local level to achieve with Promise Scholars
- Making sure all students reach their maximum potential and recognizing that this goal is beyond measure.
- Above average or even unprecedented retention and completion rates.
- Make WSCC/Promise Zone a vital [stepping] stone for our youth to further their education.
- Start creating college-[going] culture: I can do this!
- Be the Promise Zone that all other Promise Zones strive to be.
- There is something for everyone; help students match interests with careers.
- We need to define what college is to elementary and middle school so they can envision their lives changing in a positive way.



- 100% of students will receive higher education or technical skills after high school.

What is one goal that you have for our relationship with area schools or higher education institutions?

- Invaluable partners that have made us better.
- Community wide support for student success felt at every stage.
- We all send the same message and provide more encouragement.
- We [will have] a constant, consistent presence in all building that encourages kids to understand that there is someone who has their interest at heart.
- The Promise should work hand-in-hand with the schools to promote both technical and higher education beyond high school.
- [The college decides to offer” more for the working adults.
- Tighter connection in instruction and curriculum between high school and college instructors.
- Successful and strong working relationships with partners and students.

In five years, what do you want the public perception of the Promise to be? What is one Promise marketing or promotional effort that we should put our time an energy into? What success story would you most like to hear from the Promise Scholarship?

- I was wondering how some flyers/letters, etc. are printed and ready to go without going through the Marketing Committee first. I am sure the marketing meeting could meet more often, even it if is after our regular board meeting.
- Shouldn't [our web page] be linked to the county web page? Or at least our minutes? I really do thing the marketing committee should review the revisions before it goes live.
- Should Mason County Promise be on the list of scholarships on the [Community] Foundation's web page?
- Buy-in county wide that Promise students are smart, competent and employable.
- Want public perspective to be broad (widely known).
- The Promise is a success-driver.
- Success stories to be “The Promise would not allow me to fail.”
- 100% of Mason County students move beyond high school into a higher education or technical education program.
- Each year we should show success stories.
- Known as active, engaged scholarship program supporting students on their path to success.
- [The Promise] is for everyone.
- [The Promise] is a great Plan A.
- One of the top public investments ever made in Mason County.
- Vital support for community and reason for well-trained and skilled workforce.
- Leaderships continues to move working board to a board that has oversight, delegating work to coordinator.
- Have a well-developed message that blends quantitative data with qualitative student success stories.
- Market the opportunity [and] flexibility to help on YOUR path.
- Exceptional opportunity that truly make a difference for students' futures [and] helps them to [from] beginning to completion.
- Marketing [and] success initiative—build in regular meeting for Promise Scholars as they progress through college, develop relationships, [and] provide ongoing support.