



For Ball State Students and Employees **Working with Muncie Community Schools**

Ball State's [historic partnership](#) with Muncie Community Schools (MCS) supports rewarding projects, programs, and research that improve the lives of MCS students (preschool-12th grade) and advance district priorities. Similarly, these hands-on experiences enrich scholarship and student learning outcomes at Ball State.

Ball State faculty and professional staff are invited to [submit proposals](#) to engage in scholarship within Muncie Community Schools. A team of MCS and Ball State representatives review projects to ensure they align with the district's goals and the district has the capacity to support the project.

Ball State allows employees to volunteer on University time, **with supervisor approval**. Muncie Community Schools uses [GivePulse](#) to share and manage volunteer opportunities that are available to faculty, staff, and students.

Before you enter MCS buildings, consider the district's procedures and expectations outlined below.

Appropriate Screenings

Faculty/Professional Staff: Ball State employees engaged in an academic project, program, research, or volunteer effort that involves direct, frequent contact with MCS students must complete a national background check (good for one academic year). Ball State Human Resources will contact you to authorize the check, at no cost to you. You will be notified once the background check is complete.

- ▶ ***Special note for faculty-led efforts with students:*** Once your project is approved, please [email](#) a list of student participants to Ball State's [Office of Teacher Education Services and Clinical Practice](#) (OTES) at least 10 business days before entering an MCS building. Please use the subject line, "Background Check List for Approved MCS Proposal." Students are responsible for the cost of their background check (\$25) and must complete the EduRisk training, [Protecting Children from Sexual Misconduct](#).

Students: Ball State students engaged in an academic project, program, research, or volunteer effort that involves direct, frequent contact with MCS students must complete a national background check (good for one academic year) through the [Office of Teacher Education Services and Clinical Practice](#) (OTES). You are responsible for the cost of your background check (\$25) and must complete the EduRisk training, [Protecting Children from Sexual Misconduct](#) 10 business days before entering an MCS building. Check with your instructor about your responsibility to contact [OTES](#) and other expectations related to communications and interactions.

- ▶ ***Special note for graduate students:*** If you are embedded within the schools but not associated

with a specific project, your background check will be processed through Ball State's Human Resources. You will receive an email from HR to authorize a national background check, at no cost to you.

Employee and Student Volunteers: If your volunteer activities do not involve direct, frequent contact with MCS students, your background check requirements may be different. Please contact [Cynthia Miller](#), executive assistant to the Director of Public Education/CEO of Muncie Community Schools, for more information.

Prepare for Your Visit

1. **Complete screenings:** Outlined above.
2. **Prepare identification:** At any MCS location, you must carry with you at all times a (1) state issued driver's license or ID, (2) your Ball State ID, and (3) a copy of your criminal background check.
3. **Introduce yourself and clarify expectations and roles:** For many student clinical experiences, students are responsible for emailing the teacher to introduce themselves and confirm the start date, time, purpose, and frequency of the experience. Make sure you understand how and when you should reach out to the MCS professional with whom you will work.

For class projects, programs, and/or research, the professor is responsible for contacting MCS to discuss project goals, frequency, and expectations. Clarify with students as to if, when, and how they should reach out to teachers and/or administrations. Consider identifying a point-person for project communications.

4. **Discuss classroom management:** Prior to your arrival, it is essential that you understand the procedures for discipline and praise, both within the building and any relevant classroom(s). Whether it is a positive pat on the back or a more complex discussion about consequences, do not initiate or engage in classroom management without a discussion with the teacher. In general, it is best to refrain from unnecessary contact, but look to the teacher for understanding boundaries.
5. **Determine transportation needs:** Build in time to drive to and park at your school, check in at the front office, and travel to the appropriate classroom. At Muncie Central, for instance, navigating the parking lot during peak times can often add an additional 15 minutes.
6. **If you need to cancel:** If you are unable to fulfill your assignment, you are responsible to contact the appropriate MCS professional to cancel or reschedule **at least 48 hours in advance** (outside emergencies).

While at the School

1. **Arrive on time and sign in** at the reception area. Be prepared to display the appropriate identification information. Follow this procedure each time you enter the school.
2. **Engage in the moment and be present in the classroom.** Etiquette is important, as distractions within the classroom disrupt learning. No food or drinks are allowed, and all electronics should be put away, unless otherwise specified. Consider your language, posture, and attire, as you are a role model and a representative of your project and the university.

3. **Exit and sign out** at the front desk in a timely manner. If you are scheduled for a certain amount of time, do not stay longer than expected. Never exit the classroom at a time or in a way that disrupts the classroom.

A Note about Reporting Critical Incidents

If you suspect that a student is being abused or other critical incidents such as threats to school safety, you **MUST** report it. Discuss the procedures for mandatory reporting of critical incidents with the appropriate MCS teacher or administrator.

Set Yourself Up for Success: Advice from MCS Teachers

1. **Dress for success.** Business casual is the standard. No jeans, holes in clothes, tank tops, and open-toe shoes, for example. Review the school's dress code to ensure you comply, and never hesitate to ask the teacher for guidance.
2. **Be ready for anything**, from behavior and questions from students to fire alarms and active shooter drills. Never hesitate to ask a teacher for guidance on how to respond to a question or situation.
3. For your protection and the wellbeing of MCS students, **never be alone with a student.**
4. Within the parameters set by the classroom teacher, make an effort to **connect with students** by asking questions about their interests, curiosities, and goals.
5. **The teacher is the authority**, and make sure you understand how he/she manages the classroom. Discuss how he/she would like you to interact with students.
6. Each building has a different culture, so be open to and **take time to learn the procedures and expectations of each building.**
7. Each child comes to the table with a different set of circumstances. Avoid assumptions and **treat each student with respect and care.** Avoid negative talk about their hometown or neighborhoods, and **refrain from backhanded praise**, like "Oh, this is a better environment than I thought."
8. **Follow-through with your project or volunteer commitment.** If a teacher or other MCS personnel is expecting you, be there. They are counting on you and last-minute adjustments create additional stress.

Thank you for helping MCS create safe, welcoming spaces for students and supporting structures that promote academic success and wellbeing. We hope you enjoy this enriching, challenging experience within the school district.

Resources

For additional information and guidance about student background checks, contact OTEs at 765-285-1862 or otes@bsu.edu.

Questions about the project proposal process and faculty/staff background checks should be directed to [Kendra Lowery](#), assistant dean for School Engagement in Teachers college, or your college representative.

Those interested in volunteering time or services within the district (e.g. presenting to classes, assisting with field day, tutoring support, etc.) should contact [Cynthia Miller](#), executive assistant to the Director of Public Education/CEO of Muncie Community Schools, at 765-747-5208.