



Dear Families,

As we move into February, I want to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work and dedication our students and staff continue to show each day. This time of year can feel especially busy, so it's important to remember the value of balancing academics with mental health and overall well-being. Encouraging rest, self-care, and open conversations about challenges can make a big difference.

We're excited to celebrate Winter Carnival the week of February 10th, with fun festivities planned throughout the week to bring some much-needed joy and school spirit. The high school Winter Carnival dance will take place on Saturday, February 15th, and we look forward to seeing our students enjoy this special event.

As always, thank you for your continued support and partnership in making our school a place where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Here's to a fantastic February filled with growth, celebration, and connection!

Sincerely,

Morgan Nowicki



## COUNSELOR'S CORNER

- Schedule requests for next year are occurring this month! We will be sharing the 2025-2026 MHS Course Catalog with students and families soon. Schedule requests will be digital this year through Powerschool.
- The FAFSA Completion Event for seniors with MMHS and WSCC has been rescheduled for Tuesday, February 25, 2025 from 3:30-6:30. Please email Chelsea Hammer to set up an appointment during this time. A username and password must be created 3 days prior to the event and students should bring their laptop.
- The 8th grade will be visiting WSCC to learn about their CTE program offerings Friday, February 21, 2025 in the afternoon. Permission slips will be coming home soon.

# IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

- According to the U.S. Department of Education, students who miss 10% or more of school days—about 18 days in a typical school year—are more likely to fail courses, have lower test scores, and eventually drop out of school.
- Regular attendance helps students stay engaged with the material, build momentum, and avoid falling behind.

If your family is facing any challenges that are affecting your child's attendance, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are here to support you and can help explore solutions to ensure your child stays on track.

## STAFF HIGHLIGHT



Cecilia Lester  
Behavior Consultant  
Master of Social Work

Cecilia works as a Behavior Consultant at Manistee Middle High School and holds an LMSW (Licensed Master of Social Work). Cecilia graduated from West Shore Community College in 2016 with an Associate's in Arts & Sciences, then earned her Bachelor of Social Work from Ferris State University in 2019, followed by a Master of Social Work degree in 2021. In 2023, they welcomed their first child into the world, adding to their family that includes three “furbaby” cats—Gambit, Rogue, and Mira. They enjoy spending time with family, trying local cuisine, and going for walks and to the parks when the weather permits, feeling grateful to be a part of the Manistee community.



Kaitlyn McBride  
Behavioral Specialist

Kaitlyn is a Behavior Specialist at the Middle/High School, where she primarily serves middle school students. She chose to work in Behavioral Health at MAPS because of her passion for supporting students in the school setting. Kaitlyn values education deeply and understands how difficult school can be when external stressors make learning harder. Kaitlyn earned her Bachelor of Psychology in 2021 and is currently pursuing graduate studies at the University of Michigan School of Social Work. Outside of work, Kaitlyn enjoys spending time with friends and family, playing board games, card games, or video games, being outdoors, and traveling.

### MAPS Health Center



Derrick Martinez  
Behavioral Health Therapist  
Master of Social Work

Derrick is a Behavioral Health Therapist at the MAPS Health Center, where he works to make a meaningful impact on students' lives. He chose this career path because he recognized the opportunity to support adolescents during a critical time in their development. Derrick earned his Bachelor's in Social Work from the University of Texas at Austin and his Master's in Social Work, specializing in Integrated Health, Mental Health, and Substance Use, from the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor. Outside of work, Derrick is navigating life as a new step-dog dad, a first-time homeowner, and in a new relationship.