

The background features a dark blue gradient with a series of curved, glowing lines that create a sense of depth and movement. On the right side, there is a grid-like pattern of light blue lines that recedes into the distance, giving the impression of a tunnel or a digital space.

# Mecosta-Osceola ISD Internship Program

MARK W. HIGGINS & MARK R. KLUMPP

# Who is involved?

- Mecosta-Osceola ISD is working with Ferris State University to place Juniors & Seniors in an internship Program
- Bob Dwan from MSBO has been working with us from step one to create this partnership with FSU
- With a goal toward creating the next generation of MSBO members Bob has been working to create a support structure from MSBO for our interns



# Why would you start an internship program?

- We know that in this field districts are having a hard time filling positions.
  - Retirees are filling positions, districts wanting Business Office on critical shortage
- We thought when we have openings it would be fantastic to have a pool of applicants that we have already trained.
- Ferris State University is literally just across the river from us. If we have a partner that close we would be foolish to not reach out.
- Our district goals include P-20 education, this allows us to take part by assisting the education of college students.
- Affordable labor.

# What is MOISD doing?

- We are offering 80 hour, one credit hour, during the regular year internship program.
  - This allows the students to still take a full class load while in the program.
  - We pay \$10/hour and we pay for the fingerprinting of the students.
  - We are flexible to try to make it work with their schedules.
- If all goes as well as we hope we are planning to expand the hours to a 240 hour, three credit hour internship in the summer months.
- We have capacity for two interns maximum at any time given space in our current office.

# How did we get started?

- Summer 2016 – Reached out to Bob Dwan at MSBO to see if this was something they wanted to partner on. Sit down discussion at MSBO Up North Finance Committee.
- October 2016 – Contacted Ferris State via email. Reached out to Accounting Department Chair, found on their website. He brought internship coordinator into the discussion and we set up a meeting, Bob came up to attend.
- November 2016 – Discovering Accounting Careers Night
- December 2016 – Job Posting Approved and shared by Ferris, interviews third week in December.
- January 2017 – INTERNS STARTED!!!

# What do the interns do?

- We have them shadow every employee in the office on various tasks.
- There is a Google Sheet that we share among our regular staff, if they have a task for the interns they add it to the sheet so we have a list of tasks for them to do.
- They pick up tasks quickly and tend to be asked to do the same task on a bi-weekly or monthly basis, saving training time.
- Assist in the implementation of digital document retention initiative underway in our office.
- Examples of tasks accomplished: Updated salary worksheets for 2017-18 budget, Medicaid Quarterly Financial report data collecting, input attendance for payroll, sit in on budget meetings with department directors to see how the process works.

# Benefits to MOISD and Students

- Real excitement from FSU and their students for a career field they did not know existed.
- For the students they get real practical experience to build upon the theoretical lessons they learn in class. Helps to understand how the those lessons are actually used.
- On campus work typically only pays the students minimum wage, so they get a slight increase working for us.
- After some training early on they are able to take actual work off our plates, this is not just a classroom, we put them to work and they do a good job.
- With our location and part time internship program we could have a student intern with us for two full years before they graduate.

# Our Goals for the Program

- We guessed, and feel correct that no more than two interns at a time is our capacity.
- With this strategy in mind, and if a student fully embraces the idea of two years worth of interning, we can have one junior and one senior at all times.
- This should allow for one graduate ready to enter the workforce each year in case we ever have an opening.
- Level 5 leadership plans for succession, this allows us to keep the talent pool open.
- Should we not have openings there are always other postings around the state, and hopefully our experience gives the graduates a leg up on other entry level candidates.
- We would like to get to the point where there is an Intern Certification for our students to show they are capable of handling most business office tasks.



# Surprises Along the Way

- We were pleasantly surprised with how quickly the students learned the software package we used.
- They told me on day 1, "I was glad you had me doing things and learning. I thought I'd be getting coffee."
- Debated having the students work on different days, but were happy it turned out they needed to work the same day. Less time instructing, and good work done through group work.
- Unfortunately Annual Conference is during finals week, we really wanted to bring them both down.

# What can you do?

- Reach out to your local University.
- Contact the Accounting Department Chair or the Internship Program Coordinator.
- Set up a face to face meeting.
  - Show them the MSBO.org Job Posting website
- Create a job posting for the internship.
- Treat them like any other new employee.

## NOTICE OF VACANCY

Job #1617-XX

**POSITION:** Business Office Intern

**POSTING DATE:** December 2, 2016

**START DATE:** January 16, 2017

**JOB SUMMARY:** Temporary position within the business office for current college students interested in learning about school district finances. Students will work with the staff in all areas of the office including budgeting, state & federal reporting, accounts payable, payroll, employee benefits and other duties that may arise.

**QUALIFICATIONS:** Working toward a bachelor's degree in accounting, finance or other related fields. Must have reached the junior level of college in good academic standing. Active participation, sharing and cooperating in teams. Demonstrated respect for the confidentiality of communications and transactions. Must be able to meet deadlines while maintaining accuracy. Strong problem-solving skills. Excellent verbal and written communication skills. Proficient in the use of Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access. Excellent math and calculator skills. Must have desire and work ethic to learn new skills as they arise.

### ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Learn the State of Michigan Public School Accounting Manual chart of accounts coding structure.
2. Work with the Accountant to learn the general ledger accounting system.
3. Train with staff to reconcile bank statements to general ledger.
4. Learn the fundamentals of the payroll system, including retirement reporting to ORS.
5. Assist with implementation of new systems integration into the business office.
6. Attend relevant Michigan School Business Officials (MSBO) trainings and workshops as requested.
7. Assist in preparation of audit work papers.
8. Training on the State of Michigan MEGS+, CMS and other MEIS systems.
9. Work with the Accountant in the budget preparation/revision process.
10. Must pass a criminal history background investigation conducted by the Michigan State Police (MSP) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).
11. Other office duties that may arise.

**NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION:** In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the State of Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act of 1977, Section 102(a) it is the policy of the Mecosta-Osceola Intermediate School District that no person shall, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, gender, age, disability, height, weight, or marital status be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination during any program or activity or in employment. Inquiries regarding this policy should be directed to: Assistant Superintendent, Mecosta-Osceola Intermediate School District, 15760 190th Avenue, Big Rapids, MI 49307, Telephone (231) 796-3543.

# This is the job posting we put together for the position.

Once we had this made FSU put it on their job board for students. We did not even need to advertise.

# Questions and Contact

- Mark Klumpp  
Assistant Superintendent  
Mecosta-Osceola ISD  
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- Mark Higgins  
Accountant  
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