

September 8, 2020

The Board of Education of the County of Kanawha met in Special Session on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 at the Board of Education Building, Charleston, West Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Board President Becky J. Jordon at 4:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Becky J. Jordon, President
Tracy White, President Pro Tem
Ric Cavender
Jim J. Crawford, Sr.
Ryan White
Thomas E. Williams, Secretary

Debra J. Lewis, Recording Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Mark Milam, Deputy Superintendent
Paula Potter, Asst. Superintendent, High Schools, Technical & Adult Education
Amon Gilliam, Asst. Superintendent, Middle & Alternative Schools
Mellow Lee, Asst. Superintendent, Elementary
Melissa Ruddle, Asst. Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction
Kate Porter, Asst. Superintendent, Special Education & Student Support Services
Carol Hamric, Executive Director, Human Resources
Briana Warner, Communications Director
Leah Sparks, Executive Director, Technology
Alicia Warden, Health Services
Valery Harper, Executive Director, Virtual Schools
Lindsey McIntosh, General Counsel
Chuck Smith, Executive Director, Facilities, Planning & Management

PERSONNEL

A. Personnel Agenda for September 8, 2020 (Enclosure 20)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the Revised Personnel Agenda as included in Enclosure 20. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Alum Creek Elementary Renovation (Enclosure 21)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve a contract for Alum Creek Renovation and Addition Project to the lowest responsible bidder, Flint Construction Co., Inc. in the amount of \$3,199,700 per bid #21-104 as shown in Enclosure 21. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford.

Chuck Smith-This is the continuation of the MIP project that we submitted to the SBA last year that they approved funding. The low bid includes the 5 year standard maintenance and service agreement on the HVAC systems.

The above motion unanimously carried.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Re-Entry Discussion

Dr. Williams-Today we made history in Kanawha County Schools. For the first time ever our first day of school was held virtually. It's never happened before and hopefully it will never happen again. You miss the kids coming in. We have had 46,514 logons today between students and parents on Schoology so it is working. This week is a get-to-know you week. The parents and students aren't used to it so we are starting off easy so everyone can get used to what we are doing. We've had hundreds of emails and phone calls between Leah and her department they have done an outstanding job. They are inundated with phone calls. Virtual school is overflowing. They have make-up orientation tomorrow. Valery has a crew of 6 people working almost around the clock. There were some glitches today, some parents didn't know how to get on. The videos are on our website on how to connect and get into Schoology. I do have some positive stories and I'd like the three Assistants to share those with you.

OLD BUSINESS (continued)

Paula Potter-Most of the high schools reported a high attendance rate of students checking in today. At GW we had students signing on an hour before their Math class started asking questions and introducing themselves to the teacher. At Hoover the teachers said they had a great deal of their students sign on. At Riverside High they had over 2000 students view different assignments today according to their Schoology log page. Nitro High School reported that they had 80% of their students signed on today in all of their classes. St. Albans High School said they had all students in their advisor advisee classes today. At Sissonville High parents were emailing them to thank them for all the learning that took place on the first day of school. A parent sent an email on Schoology to a teacher at Ben Franklin thanking her. She was in the same room as her son when he was on his lecture for medical assisting and she feels like as an adult she would like to start school today after listening to her lecture. There were some glitches but all of the high schools had most of their students on. We had students in school at some of our schools and it worked out really well today.

Mr. White-What students were in school? Paula Potter-Special Education students if their IEP required them to be in school.

Mellow Lee-I've talked to most of my Principals today and they said it was a positive vibe. The teachers were excited to be back and the students were excited to meet their teachers. I received an email from a parent from Montrose praising Pre K and the 2nd grade teacher for all of their communication. At Lakewood they had all of their teachers on doing conferences and the students stayed on afterwards just to talk to each other. At Piedmont teachers were doing Read-A-Louds and having questions and answers so they were able to get in some good instruction today. At Overbrook the 3rd grade teacher said she had four conferences today so she could meet all of her kids. We are still getting iPads out at some of our schools for K-2. Leah's team has worked tremendously over the weekend. Marmet Elementary said every parent came to pick up the iPad and while they were there they helped them log on to Schoology and do an actual conference so everyone would be comfortable.

Amon Gilliam-Overall the middle schools have done a wonderful job. We have had thousands of students who were able to log on today. Elkview Middle parents were posting multiple positive comments about the school and the staff. East Bank Middle has had over 70% of the students log in today despite the majority of those students signed up for in-person. At Hayes over 75% of the students logged in and participated on the first day. At Cedar Grove Middle we have a lot of parents that are sending in photos of their children active on remote learning. At Chandler Academy we had over 87% of our at-risk students log in and participate today.

OLD BUSINESS (continued)

Dr. Williams-It is not perfect and there are some issues and some parents and teachers are upset but we have so many positives as well. This is unprecedented. The first day of school was all remote. I know you all hear a lot of the negatives and I wanted to you hear some of the positive.

Mrs. White-Special Ed had a curve ball thrown at them about 2 weeks ago and we've all been making changes but in Special Ed you can't catch a curve ball as quickly as the rest of us can. When they announced that IEP teams deemed that those kids could come back to school that's a lot of stuff that had to happen in a very short time.

Mr. Cavender-What would you say is the common glitch that is creating frustration?
Paula Potter-Some schedules weren't completely correct so that hurts with Schoology but there were changes made last night to help with that. At times a student would get kicked off a Schoology conference but that happens in any type of platform. We've reminded teachers and administrators to make sure you are recording your conferences so if a student is kicked off they can go back and review those things. Those are the major issues at the high school level.

Mellow Lee-Schoology is new to a lot of the elementary schools so that has what has been a curve ball. It's a learning process. Mr. Cavender-I think that's an important point. In the past Schoology was just used to keep track of your grades, etc. This is a curve ball for everyone. Amon Gilliam-We are seeing some of the same issues in middle school. It could be an internet connectivity issue or a Schoology issue. They just need to be making sure they are recording conferences so the students can go back on.

Missy Ruddle-We had Principals and counselors that truly worked all weekend long. They were in the buildings changing schedules. They had to redo their entire schedule two weeks before school started. I wanted to say that our administrators and counselors have tried to fix things.

Leah Sparks-We've had to reset thousands off temporary passwords. I think a lot of students set them aside for the summer and they can't remember their logins and passwords. Dr. Williams-How many emails do you have? Leah Sparks-Right now I have 552 just today. Dr. Williams-How many phone calls and voice messages? Leah Sparks-All of our voice mailboxes are full and they hold 95 on each line. We answered phones all day long. If you aren't getting through please know we are doing the best we can. We want to help.

OLD BUSINESS (continued)

Mrs. White-How many virtual orientations do we have left? Valery harper-Right now we have held 30 orientations for 1,483 students. This week we have 10 more left on two different dates. That will consist of about the remaining 336 kids. This is for elementary only where we do require in-person orientation for the parent because it is so parent intensive and driven. Dr. Williams-How many phone messages are on your machine? Valery Harper-I think as a team we have returned about 360 phone calls. I have 574 emails now but we are all working hard and we will get it done.

Mr. White-Sounds like we have had 20-25% that haven't logged in at the schools. What are we doing to get those kids in school? Mrs. White-I know that some of the high schools chose to keep the staggered so they may not have logged on. Leah Sparks-There were a lot of people that didn't come in for the exchanges and we locked their iPads down and they called today wanting them unlocked. Some of those could be that they didn't have their devices to log in.

Mr. Cavender-Is there a grace period that we are giving folks? Dr. Williams-This is the grace week because of situations like that and it's a 4 day week. I know a lot of the schools are trying to make contact with every child this week. Paula Potter-If it is a connectivity issue we have some high schools that have contacted the bus garages so they are sending work to students when they send the meals out on the buses. Our principals are trying to identify those students quickly.

Mr. Cavender-Did we get the MiFis? Leah Sparks-We are still working on that. The issue that we are seeing is that a lot of students in the rural areas don't have the connection. We only got enough to do one project either the Mifi or the upgrade on the buses. The MiFis are not going to pull in enough of a signal to help them in those rural areas, so what we are doing is upgrading the bus WiFis to the 5G. That will pull in a signal in those rural areas so we will be deploying buses out to the areas. Suddenlink is offering a deal to anybody that doesn't have internet. They can call the Altice Advantage Program and they are offering a 30 mg line at \$14.99 a month. No extra charges or fees and they will come to your house and will put a line in if you live in the Suddenlink area.

Mrs. White-What is our plan on Monday for the students that we have not heard from? Dr. Williams-If we haven't heard from them by Monday we have social workers that go and do visits. The schools know their kids for the most part and they will be working with the social workers to find the kids that we haven't heard from. Mrs. White-Is there a way that we can get an update on Thursday to see if our numbers have changed? Dr. Williams-Yes.

OLD BUSINESS (continued)

Mrs. White-As far as the working parents a lot of them didn't sign up to be eLearners. Are we working with those folks to give them some leeway? Dr. Williams-That's one of the reasons why we are asking teachers to record their lessons so when parents get home in the evening the parent can listen to the lessons for the day.

Mrs. White-Are meals going out daily? Dr. Williams-Meals went out today. Breakfast and lunch went out today. Tomorrow a 3 day meal box goes out for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Mrs. White-When they go out what time do they go out? Dr. Williams-The buses pick up from the school at 10:30 and they start the runs at Noon.

Mrs. White-The big question right now is classroom sizes. They don't feel like they can social distance with the classroom sizes that they have. What can we do? Dr. Williams-If we stay 5 days a week there is not a lot we can do. Blended learning would be a way to cut the numbers but that comes with its' own set of problems because child care is an issue and parents want them in 5 days a week. Realistically we can't socially distance those kids in the classrooms. The bottom line is we only have so much room. Schools like GW weren't built to have kids there all day long that's why they are on the schedule they are on. Mrs. Jordon-It's concerning for the teachers. Mr. Cavender-When Mrs. White and I went to Riverside last Friday, if it was blended there would be no worry at that school. Mrs. White-I didn't expect our numbers to be as high as they are. Amon Gilliam-Dr. Williams has offered TIRE teachers to help reduce class sizes. Dr. Williams-If blended learning is something you all would be interested in the one thing that I would be really strong about is that I truly feel like K-3 needs to be in school 5 days a week. K-2 is where you learn to read and K-3 is the transition year from learning to read to reading to learn. I think it's vitally important for K-3 to be in school period. Mrs. White-We do have another Board Meeting before we come off the blended schedule, so we don't have to decide this evening. Dr. Williams-We can always have a Board Meeting.

Mr. Crawford-Let's evaluate after they have the 2 weeks of blended schedule and see how it works out. We might want to try it for 9 weeks if we ever get to where we have our children back in class. Mrs. Jordon-Is it the Governor's orders that it has to be Saturday at 9:00? Could we not do it any earlier? Mrs. White-Can we go rouge and make our own decision as to what day we let Kanawha know or do we have to wait for that color coded map to come out? Are we mandated to do that? Dr. Williams-I don't know that we are mandated but if we would make a mistake then it would be mass confusion in the county. Mrs. White-Could we as Board write a letter that says can you let families know on Friday morning instead of Saturday night? I just think it is our due diligence to also take care of our folks. Dr. Williams-I can have a letter drafted if that is something you all want to do.

OLD BUSINESS (continued)

Mr. White-We have the authority to go remote whenever we want we just can't play sports. We could make the call on Friday if that's something the Board wants to do. Dr. Williams-We have the authority to go remote if and only if we can provide every service to every child. That includes all IEPs, the resource kids, the speech kids, the gifted kids all of everything remotely and we can't do that. There's not a county in the State that can do that. It would all have to be occupational therapy, PT, every service would have to be provided remotely if we choose to do that. If the Governor says we go remote then we don't have to do that. Mrs. White-We basically have our hands tied. Can we revisit this at our next Board Meeting? Can we look at the blended schedule and classroom sizes? Dr. Williams-This will be an ongoing conversation.

Mr. Crawford-Did you do anything about that program explaining Schoology? Dr. Williams-Yes, Mr. Crawford had asked if we could use our KCS TV and have someone on there to go through Schoology. Mrs. Ruddle spoke with Mr. Kutil today and we are getting Ms. Rhodes lined up to go on there and do something with that. Mrs. Jordon-That is a great idea. Mr. Cavender-Can KCS TV be streamed on our Facebook page since it's only on Suddenlink channels? Leah Sparks-No. Facebook as a whole is blocked by the State. Mr. Cavender-I was just trying to think how to get that out to a broader audience. Leah Sparks-We might be able to upload it to our You Tube Channel and then post it on our website.

Mrs. Jordon-If we stay online, what are social workers doing? And what are aides doing? Dr. Williams-The aides can work with the teachers. They have the ability to get online with the teachers and take a group just like they do in the classroom. The social workers we will utilize to help us find the children and make sure they have what they need.

SUPERINTENDENT'S PRESENTATION

A. Employee Discipline

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board adopt the findings and conclusions of the hearing examiner and approve the Superintendent's recommendation for dismissal of Brittany Grimmatt, and Brittany Grimmatt shall be, and she is hereby, terminated from her employment with the Kanawha County Board of Education, effective immediately. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

DELEGATIONS

None

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

Mr. Cavender-When we went to Riverside Mrs. Kennedy showed us the system they used for scheduling and that was enough to show me that they are working hard.

Dr. Williams-My one answer is no matter what you do it is wrong. Just do what's best for kids. That's all we can do.

ESTABLISHMENT OF MEETING DATES

- A. Thursday, September 3, 2020, 12:00 Noon-Special Session
- B. Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 4:00 p.m.-Special Session
- C. Thursday, September 17, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session
- D. Monday, October 5, 2020, 4:00 p.m.-Special Session
- E. Thursday, October 15, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session
- F. Monday, November 2, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Special Session at Riverside High
- G. Thursday, November 19, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session
- H. Monday, December 7, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Special Session at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary
- I. Thursday, December 17, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session

NOTE: The above meetings of the Kanawha County Board of Education, unless otherwise indicated, will be held in the Board of Education Building, 200 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, WV.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Tracy White moved: That the Special Session of the Board be adjourned. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ryan White and unanimously carried. The Special Session was declared adjourned by Board President Becky J. Jordon at 4:46 p.m.

President

Secretary

djl

9/18/2020