

October 4, 2021

The Board of Education of the County of Kanawha met in Special Session on Monday, October 4, 2021 at Piedmont Elementary, Charleston, West Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Board President Becky J. Jordon at 6:00 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**

Paula Potter, Deputy Superintendent

Melissa Ruddle, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction

Mellow Lee, Assistant Superintendent, Elementary

Briana Warner, Communications Director

Lindsey McIntosh, General Counsel

Melissa Wilfong, Title I Director

## **MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Before this meeting is called to order, we would like to have a moment of silence for a member of our KCS family who passed away last week, Mr. Gary Kinder. He was a custodian at Garnet Career Center. It feels like every week right now that is what is happening in our community and it's very sad.

## **LSIC REPORT**

Ashley James-I am the Principal here at Piedmont Elementary. This is my 5<sup>th</sup> year here. We do have one of our parents here this evening, Sarah Brown, and she will speak briefly when I am finished. Dusty Herscher, my Assistant Principal and Kelly Haynes, our Transformational Specialist are here also.

Our motto is Piedmont Panthers are prepared, productive, proud and positive. This is the motto that we have adapted and grown with since I have been here and we are pretty proud of that. Our focus by being a support school are three things: rigorous curriculum, PBIS and our social/emotional which is big right now and important. At the beginning of the year we met and did some vertical teaming, for instance a second grade teacher would meet with a first grade teacher so we could talk about what skills that those teachers feel like their students did not master while we were remote or in-person and all of the back and forth. They met as teams and created a curriculum map for the year and then we will go back and revisit that each semester to make sure that we are hitting all of the skills that we are missing. We have a new reading program called SAAVAS. The county has provided professional development to the staff already and we had professional development from the company and we are going to do more embedded professional development throughout the year because it is a brand new program. We were one of the pilot schools for literacy footprints, which is the Jan Richardson guided reading model. We use that during our guided reading intervention time and this is our 4<sup>th</sup> year using this program. We even have teachers from other schools come here and watch our staff do the program because they do it so well. We work with the Learning 20/20 Team and we have done some Schoology and Apple Classroom training already this year. We did goal setting with the staff where we go in and look at see what our kids need and set short goals, so in a matter of two to three weeks we can try to accomplish those goals and then we meet again and do the same thing so it's a cycle so we are not trying to bite off more than we can chew at one time. We are also using Performance Matters which is brand new to the county this year. Our staff has not been trained on it yet because we just came off of our wonderful 3 week break so now that we are back we had a team that went and learned about it. Three teachers and I will do a school-wide training. We meet monthly and do data meetings so we will use Performance Matters to dig into data. It has not only academic data, but

## **LSIC REPORT (continued)**

attendance and behavior data as well so we can see those trends of where our at risk students are. We also did two pretty in-depth trainings, Kelly led some of those through the Department of Education and we used a reflection tool and we went through the reflection tool and it's all the areas of school. It talks about classroom leadership, my leadership, curriculum, parent involvement and we went through the whole document as a staff. We did it in small group, then large group and met back in small groups to kind of say where is Piedmont, where do we need to focus our attention. We went through what the expectations would look like through a walk thru and we based that off the WV Department of Education walk thru evaluation form. We are also using Success Maker which is brand new to the county this year. Our students started it back before break. It is an online program for reading and math so during our intervention time, which is a 45 minute block, if a student is not with an adult during that time and they would be independent they are using this program and it levels them out so they get exactly what they need. They do it in reading and math, it's about 20 minutes a day 3-5 times a week. If they are seeing a Title I Teacher that day and the classroom teacher, they may not do Success Maker that day. They do it on days that they don't have an adult with them during that intervention time. The Apple classroom is where the teachers can go in and monitor what their kids are doing on an iPad while they are teaching a different group so we use that a lot to make sure that kids are staying where they are supposed to. We also started doing teacher support meetings monthly. This is based on what the teachers need. Some months it might be data that we go through, some months it may be that we need to talk about SAAVAS. We do a lot of goal setting with them. We also have brand new teachers here. Right now we have 6 teachers that are under 3 years in Kanawha County. So today they started a new group that met at Mary C. Snow and they partnered with teachers from Mary C. Snow and Edgewood that are also under 3 years of teaching so basically it is a networking group. Kelly and Jerry, the other Transformational Specialist, are planning professional development around the things that our teachers have been asking for, like classroom management, how do I maintain this child over here when I am trying to teach 20 kids over here so they are going to meet once a month. The teachers that went today texted me afterwards and said it was great. I think it will be really good for them to keep doing that. We need all of the support that we can get. Then we have our PBIS program. Every day our students can get up to 10 points. They don't lose points so we use a system called Kickboard and the points are broken down, so if they get here and they are prepared and on time they get a point, if they are tardy they just don't get the point. Then during their small group reading if they have done the things that the teacher has set for their expectation they will earn their point. At lunch today the points were given if they have their mask on and they are ready to go, do they have tidy space, and we talk about those expectations constantly. At the end of the week they have to have 80% of their

## LSIC REPORT (continued)

points and they get to do a fun Friday. We plan the fun Fridays for the teachers so one week it was a glow dance in their rooms, one time we did water balloons outside which was great they loved it. It's for the last 20 minutes on Friday when we do it. This 9 weeks we are going to let the kids pick what they want to do. Some of the kids were motivated by anything that we did and some of them only wanted to work for what they wanted to work for. We thought we would change it up this 9 weeks and let the kids make some of the decisions on what they would like, so today I went through the classrooms and Mr. Herscher did as well, we kind of split up the building and we were asking the kids their ideas. The kids are into beyblades, and some of them wanted a pajama party so they have all kinds of ideas so that's what we are going to do this 9 weeks. Every Friday they will get to pick what their reward is. We have assigned a staff member from the administrative team, the counseling team and the Title I team to each grade level. We will go in every day and monitor that grade and see if they got their points, who didn't get theirs and what they can do. If at the end of the week they don't get their points, they do a goal-setting session with us so for the following week we can see why they didn't get their points. Were they late, were they up out of their seat constantly? Then we work through each individual student. Mr. Herscher just went to Nitro Elementary, they have a really good PBIS Program and Mrs. Garrett shared a lot of ideas with us so I'm excited for the stuff that he brought back. We are getting the parents onboard to Kickboard. They are all used to Class Dojo and now we are gradually trying to migrate them over. A lot of the classes are doing a daily tracking sheet. We hired a social/emotional coordinator with the money that the County provided. Her name is Caitlyn Lastoria, which was our full-time social worker. She has been at Piedmont a couple years longer than me but she has kind of been the consistent person here with the changes in leadership. She created a weekly newsletter that goes out to the staff with self-care tips, and then she created self-care coupons that each staff member gets that they can use once a month. It's for 20 minutes of self-care so the staff member can leave the room, Caitlyn or the counselor go into the room and do social/emotional activities with the students and self-care tips while the teacher takes their break. The teachers love it and the kids get to see someone different, building that relationship with the counselor and the social worker. She also gives teachers brain breaks. That's for 10 minutes and she comes in and rewards the students for attendance and the teacher gets to take a quick break there and that is also once a month. She attends all of our monitoring meetings where we go through not just academics, but we look who is missing a lot, we have a COVID tracking document, we look to see if someone needs a referral for mental health. We also have a link on all of our emails that is called the Panther Help Line. You just click on it and it takes you straight to a Google form where you can fill out anything that a student might need, if

## LSIC REPORT (continued)

they need shoes or if they have a headache and then we can send it to where it needs to go. It's really cut down on kids being in the hallway or coming to the office for a band aid or whatever. Our leadership team created a mental health committee and we have a culture committee, behavior committee, curriculum committee and a parent involvement committee and each committee has a goal that they will work on and any decisions that are made for the school are made through this committee, so it's just not myself and Mr. Herscher making the decisions for the whole school. The people that are on the leadership team were chosen by their committee. Our Piedmont data from the end of last year showed that at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading we were at 17% proficient, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math 17%, 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading 14%, 4<sup>th</sup> grade math 11% and 5<sup>th</sup> ELA 31 %, 5<sup>th</sup> grade math 21% and 5<sup>th</sup> science grade 17%. I know those numbers are very small but our 5<sup>th</sup> grade numbers were very close to the county average and the state average. Our 3<sup>rd</sup> grade numbers jumped significantly from what they were in years past and our 4<sup>th</sup> grade numbers are still lower. A lot of those kids did not test the previous year because they were in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and we went on COVID and didn't test so now they took the test the first time as 4<sup>th</sup> graders. I know the scores aren't as high as we want them to be but for us to be in almost two years of a pandemic and to get scores like this I feel like our teachers worked ten times harder than it shows here. I've looked at data from other schools and we are not the lowest, there are actually multiple schools that are lower than us. That's a huge success for us and I want to celebrate that. When you go from the bottom and you move up 5 or 6 notches that's a good thing so it's not where we want to be but it's way better than it has been before. We are going to use some of the stuff that Mr. Herscher brought back from Nitro. They have some nice banners with all of their PBIS logos on them. We have ours on banners that we made so I think it's time to spend some money and buy some nice banners. We are also currently giving out rewards each 9 weeks so we are going to make a bigger deal about that. We are going to get signs for the kids and really show out those kids that get those awards. We are getting a new playground. We have continuous problems here every day. This morning there was a man out there sleeping and the janitor couldn't get him awake. Kate White, Charleston Rotary and the City of Charleston have worked tirelessly. They have raised almost a half a million dollars. Our students raised over \$6,000 bringing in pennies and dollars. It's much needed. All we are waiting for is some red tape. There will be two structures out there. One will be for public access from the City and anybody can use it at any time. The other will be just for Piedmont students during Piedmont hours so we can block it off from others, but we would still have access to that other playground as well. There's going to be a basketball court in the middle of the structures and there will also be quite a bit of field and green space for soccer or kickball or whatever the kids want to play. It's going to be a very nice playground. On Thursday we will have our visit from the State Department and after that visit we are going to meet with the State

## LSIC REPORT (continued)

Department team and Board Office members and we will have our diagnostic review where we will go over everything so at that point we will make adjustments based on their recommendations. One of the things that I pride myself most on here at Piedmont is the relationships with our families, our students, our teachers. It's very much a family atmosphere. We are going to try and get more people connected with Schoology and more people to join the PTO.

Sarah Brown-I am the current President of the PTO here at Piedmont. I hope that you all understand the great community that we have here at Piedmont. It's great to be back in this room where we have our award ceremonies that we haven't got to attend for the last 18 months, but the staff has taken the time each 9 weeks to record videos where they read aloud who has made the honor roll or perfect attendance and they posted those videos for families to watch. We've also had members of our PTO that are also teachers doing profiles of each teacher on our private Piedmont Families' Facebook page. We are really proud of the community that we foster here. We have a specific ask and that is that we are coming up on the opportunity to have our HVAC units installed and at the same time we would like to have the walls and doors closed here at Piedmont. People may remember that we are an open concept school and that was a neat concept perhaps back then when the schools were built, but now we know there are so many distractions for students it can be very hard for kids to focus. We also know that we are still dealing with COVID and I think we will be living with it in some way for years so having those smaller defined spaces with separate circulating air will be the best way to keep our kids safe in the long run. Thank you all for being here.

Ashley James-Sarah brought up a point that's been brought up multiple times but it is very disruptive when you are upstairs when teachers are trying to teach, they are loud and animated so it's hard to keep this class silent when this class is trying to take a test. It is not conducive to their learning. So the hope is while the HVAC and the windows are being replaced it would be the perfect time to fix the problem.

Mr. White-How many kids has Piedmont lost since COVID? Ashley James-We teeter around 275 -310 and we are around 285 right now. We might lose 5 today and get 4 tomorrow. We are very transient but we have not seen our enrollment drop since COVID.

Mr. Crawford-I think you guys are really working hard and if you are making progress that's what is important. Ashley James-Thank you very much, I appreciate that.

## **LSIC REPORT (continued)**

Mrs. White-You do an amazing job here and you are always very welcoming to any of us that want to stop by and we are thankful that you are here. Ashley James-You guys are welcome here at any time.

Mrs. Jordon-I know it's not an easy job here at all but everyone stays so positive.

Dr. Williams-I'd like to thank you all for your presentation and I made a note and I'll talk to Chuck tomorrow to see if we can get an estimate on how much it would cost because right now is the perfect time to do it before they install the new HVAC. We will get an estimate and then bring it to the Board and we will go from there. This building and Andrew Jackson were both open concept schools that were built back in the late 60's. Andrew Jackson has already been closed up.

## **PERSONNEL**

A. Personnel Agenda for October 4, 2021 (Enclosure 49)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the Personnel Agenda as included in Enclosure 49. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ryan White and unanimously carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

A. Out of State Travel Requests (Enclosure 50)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the Out of State Travel Requests as contained in Enclosure 50. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford and unanimously carried.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S PRESENTATION**

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board adopt the findings and conclusions of the hearing examiner and approve the Superintendent's recommendation for dismissal of James Lynch, and James Lynch shall be, and he is hereby, terminated from his employment with the Kanawha County Board of Education, effective immediately. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ryan White.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S PRESENTATION (continued)**

Mrs. White-This is our first of several that will be coming up. As adults we send our kids to school and teach that monsters don't exist but sometimes they do. This has affected all of us and we apologize to the families. We are very thankful for our staff members that took the lead and moved forward.

The above motion unanimously carried.

## **QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

Mrs. Jordon-Dr. Williams, when we tour Clendenin on Monday October 18<sup>th</sup> can we come to the Board and then call a Board Meeting and go on up because it will take a few hours of everyone's time? Dr. Williams-Sure.

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF MEETING DATES**

- A. Monday, October 4, 2021, 6:00 p.m.-Special Session at Piedmont Elementary
- B. Thursday, October 21, 2021, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session
- C. Monday, November 1, 2021, 6:00 p.m.-Special Session at Mary C. Snow West Side Elementary
- D. Thursday, November 18, 2021, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session
- E. Monday, December 6, 2021, 6:00 p.m.-Special Session at Riverside High School
- F. Thursday, December 16, 2021, 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. Ric Cavender and unanimously carried. The Special Session was declared adjourned by Board President Becky J. Jordon at 6:33 p.m.

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President

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Secretary

djl

10/15/2021