

From: Gwen Wisler <gwenwisler@avlcouncil.com>
Sent: 9/24/2020 11:09:31 AM
To: Gene Freeman <gene.freeman@acsgmail.net>
Cc:
Subject: Re: ACS Superintendent Monthly Update for Vice Mayor Wisler (and Council)

Thank you!
Gwen

On 09/24/20 10:00 AM, Gene Freeman wrote:

Hi Gwen,

Attached in Word and pasted below is our monthly snapshot of what's on the plate in Asheville City Schools.

Have a good day. Stay well.

Gene

Gene Freeman, Ed.D.
Superintendent

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Monthly Superintendent Report to Vice Mayor Gwen Wisler – Sept. 24 #3
Approaching six weeks under Option C with both optimism and caution! Gene

- **Equity, First and Foremost**

- I feel so good about our Positive Opportunity to Develop Success (PODS) program! It is making a difference. As of today, Kidada and Shaunda and their partners have grown the program to 19 PODS, serving 192 children K-12.
- Our plans to provide families in public housing with easily accessible broadband connectivity have made significant gains in the past two weeks. We have shifted our 'trial project' and resources to the Southside homes (Livingston, Erskine and Walton Apts.), which comprises 106 buildings and may be home to as many as 300 school-age children. We had a good meeting with the Dogwood Health Trust and I sense they could become a financial partner in this \$100,000 'impact project'. The City of Asheville is also keenly interested in our work. We have a meeting scheduled next month with our team and a potential service provider.
- We have recently completed assessments for both Read to Achieve and using our new STAR tool (worked well in Pennsylvania). The results are disheartening but at least it gives us a starting point as we move forward to address the student achievement epidemic.
- I have asked for a list of non-readers (all grades) and have directed a full summer program for 2021. Numerous students are falling further behind. These two initiatives are just the beginning of building a foundation for student success.
- REI, with 'sold out' sessions Sept 19 and 20 and October 3-4, is alive and well.
- We continue to cultivate various local agencies that support our students
 - **Thoughts on the Transition from Option C (Remote) to Option B (Hybrid)**
- We received valuable/balanced feedback from the Sept 17 Stakeholder Event, in addition to Mr. Withrow's teacher/staff survey. The RN and parent who attended, Ms. Porter, provided us a package of sample face masks and info for study. Today we sent out a 3-question survey to our families. As you probably have surmised, our teachers are the most reluctant group when it comes to returning students, a statewide issue/concern for numerous districts.
- Monday, I directed my Leadership Team to study/evaluate the following elements as we prepare for my recommendation on Oct 5: air quality enhancements; consistency with thermometers; streamlined entry protocols; staggering student arrival times; lessons learned from our Pre-K experience; possibly returning one grade at a time; staff concerns; perhaps shorter school days; transitioning secondary students, potential return dates.
- I will focus on our remote curriculum/teaching and learning in my next report.
 - **Auxiliary Services**

- We continue to move forward on examining the future of the Asheville Primary School facility, and, eventually, the current program offered there. The first town hall meeting went well. I sense that our stakeholders at this West Asheville location realize that the facility cannot stand as is. Much more to follow.
- Despite rumors to the contrary, we have experienced no work related spread of COVID to this date and continue to enhance our screening protocols. Shane and his staff work hand-in-hand with the Health Department and Ashley-Michelle's communications keep our stakeholders in the loop day-in and day-out. Fingers crossed as we move forward.
- Our School Nutrition folks are serving more than 1,600 meals a day. We have four food distribution sites, drive-throughs for meal pickups at five additional sites plus we are providing meals to numerous POD sites, all Pre-K sites and for ACS staff children.
- Our 20-day attendance stats: 4,240 students (down only 83 from last year...that's good!); elementary #s are down 171, secondary up 88; System wide: 36.9 minority, 63.1% non-minority; our one 'bubble' – 790 9th and 10th graders!
- Current capital projects include a new roof at Claxton and bids for a turf field at AHS for multiple teams' practice.
- Amended Sports Update, first contest: Cross Country & Volleyball, Nov 16; Swimming and Diving, Dec 7; Basketball, January 4; Soccer & Lacrosse, Jan 25; Football, Feb 26 ((lots of hot chocolate); Golf/Tennis ([M]/ Soccer/Softball, Mar 5; Baseball/Tennis [W]/Track & Field/Wrestling, April 26; and Cheerleading Invitational, May 1.
 - **Quick bursts**
 - Renaming Vance Elementary School moving forward with town hall meetings and task force yesterday; goal: two 'finalist' names for your review in January.
 - To ensure equity, we implemented the classified salary adjustments for all (not phases) at an annual cost of about \$500k; these dedicated staff members will see the first increase in their Sept 30 check.
 - Yesterday I sent a 'Letter to Administrators and Principals' re professional conduct re making public comments as a rep of ACS. That followed the unfortunate remarks from one of our principals during the Sept 17 meeting.
 - We are beginning to think about a January Board Retreat; more info soon.
 - Sarah Cain has been recognized with a statewide award for arts education.
 - Because it did not fit in my renovated kitchen at home, I recently donated a new refrigerator to Claxton Elementary.