

Superintendent Board Report

February 22, 2024

Schools:

Junior/Senior High:

January - School Counselor Scheduling Information meetings held with students

1/17-2/2 - CDT Testing, ELA/Math/Science

1/22-26 - Special Education Audit

February - School Counselor Scheduling meetings with parents

2/20-21 - IXL Testing, ELA/Math grades 7-8

1/26 - PWCTC 8th grade tour

2/1-2 - PMEA County Chorus

2/1-2 - PMEA County Band

2/7 - Varsity Academic League competition

2/8 - College/Career Fair @ Pittsburgh Convention Center

2/9 - Peer Jury

2/10 - JV Academic League competition

2/15 - Washington Co FFA Vet Science Contest @ Avella

2/16 - Ranger Rally @ HS

2/17 - PA FFA ACES Leadership Conference

2/20 - Art/History Field Trip to Vanka Murals @ Millvale

2/20-21 - National FFA Spirit Week

Ranger Staff Recognition - 2/2/24

Elementary Center:

Completed the mid-year DIBELS assessment

The IXL diagnostic window is 2/19 through 3/1

4th grade successfully completed the NAEP assessment in reading and mathematics (Federal Mandate).

School wide free assembly on bald eagles was held as well as the Valentine's Day Parties (2/9)

Congratulations to the 5/6th grade Girls South Hills Travel Team for winning the 2024 Upper St. Clair Girls Basketball Invitational Tournament. They went 5-0 in the tournament.

At this time, 53 students are attending the after school acceleration program that began February 13th and runs through March 28th.

The Fort Cherry Flight School begins April 8th and concludes May 14th on Mondays and Tuesdays from 3:45 to 5:15 and will be offered to grades 4-8. The program is grant funded.

Pre-K Night was held on February 15th with 35 families attending.

Athletics:

Boys basketball - The team is currently 17-5 overall and won their 3rd section championship in a row. They play a first round playoff game vs. Winchester Thurston at Avella and won. The next game is scheduled for Friday, February 23.

Girls basketball – The team finished as Co- champions for the first time since 2013. They won a first round playoff game over Beth Center 66 to 16. They played South Side in WPIAL quarterfinals on Wednesday and lost a close game. The team qualified for the PIAA playoffs. Their current record is 18-6 overall.

Wrestling - Isabella Spotti and Abigail Dolanch both finished 3rd place in their respective weight classes at WPIALs this past weekend at North Allegheny. They will advance to the Western Regionals on March 1st and 2nd at Canon Mac. Six Fort Cherry wrestlers (Braedon Welsh 2nd, Shawn Robertson 3rd, Nathan Harrison 5th, Anthony Salvini 4th, Chas Rush 5th, and Drake Buzzard 3rd) placed at sectionals and will advance to the individual WPIAL championships on Feb 23rd and 24th at Chartiers Valley High School.

7/8 Volleyball – Has started their season. There are 25 players on the 7 and 8 team.

Spring Sports – have a start date of Monday, March 4th.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Elementary Life Skills (currently 5 students): Consultation with Watson Institute is ongoing. Monthly team meetings are being held with the classroom staff, related service providers, and administration to provide a forum for discussion. There is continued progress with all students.

Monitoring: Cyclical monitoring is completed. We anticipate only one area where corrective action is required (Least Restrictive Environment). It is important to note that FC has improved by 10% in this area this year alone, and is now congruent with state averages. This was achieved by the elimination of the special education homerooms at FCHS and having more conversations with families to ensure that student needs are met in their least restrictive environment. The District will be cited on assessment participation; however, since the District already submitted an improvement plan with PDE last year, we do not anticipate additional corrective action being necessary.

Paraprofessionals: Due to 2 resignations, we are now hiring for 2 vacancies.

RC of PA: Dr. Lauer met with representatives from ARC of PA, who is going to provide grades 4–8 content area staff with co-teaching training in the fall of 2024. Additionally, ARC will partner with FC on the IncludeMe initiative, to build more inclusive environments for students with disabilities. Part of this project will likely look at upgrades and additions to sensory spaces in both buildings over the next several years. This program and training is provided to FC at no cost.

GUIDANCE

Scheduling: Scheduling information for 24-25 is distributed on the website and was sent via a number of eBlasts. The counselors have meetings scheduled with families who requested one, and all students will meet with their counselor as part of the process. Meetings with families may be in person, on the phone, or virtual via Google Meet.

GIFTED

Acceleration: Dr. Lauver is meeting with teams of content teachers from both FCEC and FCHS to provide draft guidelines for acceleration in subject areas. Feedback will be gathered through 2/29, and the final proposed document will be shared with the Board thereafter.

FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Monitoring: Monitoring data is due virtually by March 31. Mrs. Burford and Dr. Lauver are recommending review and/or revision of several policies to ensure that all policies are compliant with federal guidelines. We do not anticipate major findings on this monitoring.

Improving School Performance (ISP) Conference: Mrs. Risacher, Mrs. Shea, and Mrs. Kramer attended the ISP conference at Station Square in January. This conference is focused on strategies to provide interventions and building student-centered systems for learning in schools, and it is sponsored by the PA Federal Programs Coordinators Association.

Facilities and Grounds

Over the past two months, the Facilities departments have been busy with events, weather, projects and general winter maintenance.

With the board's approval last month we were able to officially welcome aboard our newest full time cleaner Stacey Holoran. Stacey has done a great job in her first month full time at our High School. We also have been able to have a new sub cleaner work a couple of days and recently have received paperwork for a second sub who is now available to work. These subs will continue to be vital to our goal of keep and setting a standard within our district.

Just this week we took delivery of our new Steiner tractor. The maintenance staff is thrilled to learn this equipment and thanks to the board for the approval of this new machine. We also have worked multiple times to clear snow and ice from campus over the last month. We have used a new vendor for a different bagged ice melt. This alone could have a noticeable savings moving forward, an approximate savings of one hundred and fifty dollars per skid. I continue to try and be mindful of our opportunity to keep budget constraints in mind. We hope to be close to moving past this time of year now, but are mindful of the chance of a late season snow storm over the next month.

On the event side, we have continued to host youth basketball games on the weekends, and a couple weeks back hosted a two day youth wrestling tournament. I personally have attended these events and I have been thrilled to see the community excitement for the youth sports. The wrestling tournament is a taxing event on our staff and facilities. We have some fine members of our team who stepped up and helped make this a great event for our youth and community.

We have also recently completed the installation of new heating expansion tanks at the Elementary Center, this project was board approved last fall but delays in the supply chain pushed back installation until this past month. This was a vital infrastructure upgrade for our heating systems as we replaced 1988 produced tanks which were original to the facility.

We worked to contain a few small leaks in the building from the freeze and thaws of the last month. We have also addressed the locks on multiple doors throughout the High School. We have spent many hours continuing to grind and tinker with the current locks to get them to perform correctly.

We are in the process now of receiving quotes for more upgrades throughout the district. Some are repairs, some will be true upgrades. These will both help efficiency and some to the aesthetic appearance of the buildings.

As the weather turns, we have and will continue to begin preparations for spring athletics. We have begun to groom the fields and prep the track locations we do have. We have multiple other exterior projects planned for the coming months after the weather turns to the spring season.

I continue to welcome and appreciate the input from all stakeholders throughout the district. Please reach out with any questions and concerns

State Funding Applications, Mandates and Updates:

Comprehensive Draft Plan posted to website for public review as per PDE guidelines

PDE Special Education Cyclical Monitoring completed

The Fort Cherry School District and Southwest Training Services Career Readiness Program application was approved by the LSA. The District will purchase a Anatomage table with the grant funding (\$92,240) as well as work with Southwest Training Services to develop student Career Readiness skills (i.e., resume development, interview skills, appropriate attire, and guidance regarding high demand careers).

Reviewed CDT and PVAAS growth data with principals and interventionists

High School working on scheduling

Met with teachers regarding contract negotiations

Attended several meetings to address chronic truancy issues at the high school

Reviewed updates to PA Smart Grant application and funding guidelines

Attended a number of matches and games honoring our Winter Sports teams

Met with Penn State University representatives regarding increasing student teaching positions at rural schools (Fort Cherry). Feedback was positive and the University agreed to explore the use of online meeting tools to accomplish the placements.

Held Learning Walks (observations) with building administration at both schools

Preliminary budget discussions held with both building administrative teams

Met with PSEA representatives regarding personnel issues

TEALS (Microsoft) Visit—April 4th—Review partnership and instructional approach—Dr. DaQuan Bashir