

Welcome to the 2018-2019 School Year!

As we begin this school year, there are some points of interest of which you should be aware.

We were pleased to use federally funded financial allotments to provide our staff with an enlightening and informative beginning of the year in-service program. Our presenter, Chelonnda Seroyer, began her educational career as a high school English teacher in Madison, Alabama. She used Dr. Harry Wong's book, The First Days of School, as an "instruction manual" to set up her classroom. At the end of her first year of teaching she was awarded the "Bob Jones First Year Patriot Award." At the end of her second year of teaching she was awarded the "Patriot Award." At the end of her fourth year of teaching...she received the "Teacher of the Year" award. Chelonnda was also an executive member of the Madison City School's New Teacher Induction Team where she, along with central staff personnel, coordinated the induction program for new teachers coming into the school system. She has also been awarded The Toyota International Teacher of the Year Award. The First Days of School is a very useful tool for instruction; therefore, and the district administrators were provided a book that Ms. Seroyer co-authored with Dr. Wong, The Classroom Management Book, which they studied. This overall program was very well received and we believe we were provided with valuable tips and information to both learn and review so as to enhance the learning environments of our children. This has instilled much appreciated optimism among many of the staff members who experienced Ms. Seroyer's words of insight, humor and wisdom from a very practical perspective.

The Board of School Directors also hit head on the ongoing, on and off issue of mold, that has plagued our district schools, with emphasis on WCES, since the opening of the building: over 20 years ago. Most of us speak with direct experience regarding our own children who attending WCES, some at its opening, so we speak with experience when we acknowledge little notification was presented to us as we recollect what we remember regarding mold. Over time, however, it seemed to have become an issue of which the entire community was aware. Although drains were built around some parts of the building, at least one—the most impactful-- will be specifically re-evaluated. Our Board of School Directors has implemented a direct action plan that began prior to the start of the school year. Working diligently to address this circumstance, a microbiologist was brought in to test the air prior to student arrival. Targeted rooms were cleaned by this company. The school was deemed safe for student presence. In addition, a remediation plan was developed. We were fortunate to be able to begin school on time.

Our efforts did not and have not stopped, however. Due to the especially humid and harsh summer, our planning and attention were heightened. HEPA filtration is the preferred method of vacuum cleaning and new HEPA filters were purchased and installed, with extra filters waiting "in the wings" for immediate use as necessary. Dehumidifiers were purchased for the bottom floor rooms of the school. Others are available and have been used for other classrooms on other levels as determined to be useful. Humidity provides a feeding ground for mold, and these machines monitor room humidity. To exacerbate their effectiveness, classroom doors are to be closed and dehumidifiers to remain on to monitor the humidity. In addition, the HVAC controls are to have been adjusted to that the temperature remains constant and does not fluctuate over the weekends or over the summer, as this discrepancy is not the best practice for this situation.

Because a part of her background has been in both elementary teaching and administration, Dr. McCracken and the restoration company discussed the practice of the

children sitting on the floors. That conversation led her to direct the teaching staff that children were to be precluded from sitting there. Do to the immediate cooperation and ingenuity of the teaching staff, other choices were discovered so that our children can move around the room and sit safely on the floor if so desired by their teachers.

Since the floors are concrete covered with carpeting, the board is considering a plan to have the carpeting and underlying glue removed in an unoccupied test room, cleaned with appropriate anti-mold materials (as were used in the building prior to student admittance.) It has been explained that both carpet and cement are porous substances. So, a determination will be made if carpet removal is necessary, because the underlying cement may also be a host for moisture. Therefore, if the "experimental room" undergoes this treatment, the air would be continually tested, and the Board could make future decisions based on relevant data.

Most importantly, please understand that Pennsylvania has no regulations or standards regarding mold levels in schools. The state Department of Health has the most involvement, but its role is mostly to advise schools dealing with mold. "There is no law in the books that dictates what [schools] are supposed to in this case," said April Hutcheson, a spokeswoman for the state health department.

Along lines of safety and security, the district purchased several handheld metal detectors to add to our safety and security arsenal. Administrators were trained this summer by our knowledgeable school resource officer, Andrew Zimmer, on the proper use of these instruments so they may be effectively used as necessary.

In other matters, the Pennsylvania School Code has been amended to require the appointment of an administrator to the duties associated with a Safety and Security Coordinator no later than August 31, 2018. The Board of School Directors voted in a very timely manner to appoint these newly delineated responsibilities accordingly as they must be appointed to a current administrator in every district in our state. This is not a new position. They are responsibilities the state has deemed necessary for every public school district to follow.

Instructionally, our teaching and administrative staff has been reminded of the value of standards-based instruction and it is my hope that this will be reflected in the test scores upon which all the public schools in Pennsylvania are and have been judged since the early 2000's.

I look forward to sharing other updates as the school year progresses.

Yours in education,

Helen K. McCracken, Ed. D.
Superintendent

And the **Central Greene Board of School Directors**