

EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Pleasants County Schools' goal is to develop self-directed, motivated learners who demonstrate the skills and knowledge fundamental to becoming successful adults in the digital world. The West Virginia College and Career Readiness Standards define what students are expected to know and be able to do. The 21st Century Learning Skills and Technology Tools Content Standards will be utilized, which include information, communication skills, thinking, and reasoning skills. Pleasants County Schools expect students to:

- Master skills needed for reading, writing, speaking, and computing;
- Develop and maintain the ability to form ideas, to think, to reason, to create and have a positive attitude toward learning;
- Acquire the skills, understanding, and appreciation necessary for relating to and working with other people;
- Acquire knowledge and understanding of society's social, economic, and political systems, and shall acquire an understanding of personal relationship to them;
- Acquire the skills, knowledge, and understanding necessary for leading a healthy and safe life;
- Select and prepare for a job appropriate to the personal needs and abilities and the changing needs of society;
- Acquire a sense of self-esteem through and understanding and appreciation of his/her abilities, needs, interests, and goals;
- Acquire the knowledge, habits, and attitudes of a responsible citizen;
- Acquire the ability to develop basic values and ethical principles and apply them to life;
- Develop an understanding of an appreciation for people from other social, cultural, ethnic, and national groups both past and present;
- Develop the skills for effective living in a democracy, using the democratic process and deep conviction of the values of a democracy.

In an effort to develop these capacities within the student population, the Superintendent, with assistance from faculty members, administration, students and citizens has described the mission and core beliefs of the Pleasants County School System in their Strategic Plan as follows:

Mission Statement:

ALL students will leave career and college ready to take their place and succeed in our global society.

Core Beliefs:

The Pleasants County Schools believe:

- our highest priority should be to provide an accessible, clean, safe environment in which students can maximize their learning potential.
- our schools should embrace a positive school culture and should promote academic growth and, professional and personal integrity.
- the education of our students is a partnership among community, schools, parents, and students.
- clear communication is vital to the success of the system.

In addition to our mission statement and core beliefs, there are other characteristics of a high quality school program which will be demonstrated in Pleasants County. The school system seeks to establish programs which will enable every individual to achieve his/her highest potential through a developmental sequence of learning experiences from

early childhood through adulthood. Every child in the Pleasants County School system shall encounter conditions and situations maximizing personal development. Desirable physical, mental and social development of the child is dependent upon the integration of experiences provided by the school system. Each programmatic level will focus on the pedagogy for grades Pre K-4, 5-8, and 9-12.

Early Childhood Education (Grades PK – 4)

The Pre-Kindergarten program will provide opportunities for the development of early literacy and numeracy skills by utilizing the state approved curricular frameworks and assessments to inform and individualize instruction. Teachers will build on what children already know in order to consolidate their learning and foster acquisition of new concepts and skills through hands-on active exploration of their learning environment, problem solving, communication, creativity, and use of their imaginations. Learning environments shall be print rich and reliant on manipulatives for hands-on and inquiring based learning. In addition, teachers will incorporate meaningful ways of communicating with and involving parent/guardian/family. Through this program all students are expected to be ready to enter the regular school program at the kindergarten level. By enriching the experiences of students at an early age, children are better prepared to learn.

Children in kindergarten through 2nd grade span a broad spectrum of development. The developmental level of each child is significant in the offering of daily instruction. Teachers shall utilize a variety of instructional strategies, including the integration of technology, to assure all children are mastering the 21st century content knowledge and skills. For intermediate elementary students, daily classroom instruction will be based on a variety of assessments that provide for personalized instruction. Schedules for intermediate elementary students shall allow the flexibility necessary to provide additional time and instruction for students who are below mastery in English Language Arts and Mathematics. Teachers in intermediate elementary classrooms shall utilize a variety of instructional strategies, including the integration of technology, to assure that all students reach the performance level of mastery or above on the West Virginia College and Career Readiness Standards. Strategies for early detection and intervention to correct student deficiencies in English Language Arts and Mathematics shall be employed throughout the instructional term in each of the primary elementary and intermediate elementary grades. All students with special needs will be provided the necessary accommodations and modifications to succeed in their least restrictive environment. Placement of special needs programs are designed to meet the needs of all students.

Middle Childhood Education (Grades 5-8)

Middle level education builds upon the results of early childhood education and transitions students into the adolescent education program. Middle level education provides unique, age appropriate educational opportunities that challenge all students to use their minds well, providing them with the curriculum, instruction, assessment, support, learning skills, technology tools, and time they need to achieve rigorous academic standards. Students are provided opportunities for both independent inquiry and learning in cooperation with others. Middle level programming is challenging and engaging, tapping the young adolescents' boundless energy, interests and curiosity through rich exploratory experiences. Students learn to understand important concepts, develop essential skills and apply what they learn to real world problems. The creation of small learning communities of adults and students produce stable and mutually respectful relationships. All students with special needs will be provided the necessary accommodations and modifications to succeed in their least restrictive environment. Placement of special needs programs are designed to meet the needs of all students.

Adolescent Education (Grades 9-12)

Adolescent education provides students the 21st century intellectual, social/emotional, physical, and technological capacities needed for successful entry into adulthood. Pleasants County's adolescent education program will provide challenging and rigorous courses in the programs of study that will enable students to achieve high levels of competence so they can complete graduation requirements and be prepared to successfully enter and compete in the workplace and in post-secondary education. Students will be provided opportunities to explore and select career goals and participate in learning activities that result in effective decision making. All students with special needs will be provided the necessary accommodations and modifications to succeed in their least restrictive environment. Placement of special needs programs are designed to meet the needs of all students.

Operational Plan

The Pleasants County School learning environments will be designed to comply with all state and federal regulations. Foundation principals of operation are as follows:

1. College & Career Readiness Standards

The West Virginia College & Career Readiness Standards describe the destination that schools and students are expected to reach, but by themselves have little power to affect change. These standards have been written to be broad statements that define the knowledge, skills and understanding all students must demonstrate in a content area at the end of the kindergarten through college career readiness sequence of study. Teachers must understand standards are not meant to be mastered in one learning opportunity, that students require common, clear learning targets and the rigor of the curriculum is identified in the skills students are learning not the standards. Educators must become proficient in their ability to identify embedded learning targets in the standard so that nothing essential is missed during instruction. They must be able to articulate what students should know, understand and be able to do in order to demonstrate mastery of the standard. Accordingly, teachers must be able to sequence the targets into developmentally appropriate learning progressions. By deconstructing or clarifying learning targets, we take a broad standard and break it into smaller more explicit learning targets.

2. Assessment for Learning

The purpose of classroom assessment is to support student learning and to use data to inform instructional pacing, design and differentiation. In order to support student learning, classroom assessment needs to involve students deeply in the assessment process, provide specific, descriptive feedback during the learning, and include evaluative feedback as required to communicate and report progress over time. Highly effective teachers recognize when students are deeply involved in the classroom assessment process and become more aware of their strengths and areas needing improvement. Only then are they likely to take action to close the gap between where they are in their learning and where they need to be. Teachers and administrators must embrace the purpose of assessment as a tool to inform instruction on a daily basis.

3. Distributive Leadership as a Driving Force

Pleasants County Schools has adopted the core belief that "Leadership Matters". In recent years there have been changes in district and school level leadership. Regardless of the changes in personnel our school system must never falter and transition must be seamless. Subsequently, our district has embraced a commitment to implore a distributive leadership model operationalized by high quality standards. Schools have identified a leadership team and established common practices for operation and a strategic focus. Through collaborative conversations with school leadership teams, district level leadership has improved communication, increased accountability and has provided a stronger understanding of the supports and resources needed for their growth. In the coming school year, efforts will be made to strengthen our leadership team model.

4. Educator Evaluation System for Teachers, Counselors and Principals

The West Virginia Department of Education and the West Virginia Legislature have adopted an educator evaluation system with a vision of school leadership and effective teaching. This system includes all stakeholders and requires goal setting and data-driven outcomes. This system is expected to create a culture of increased support, accountability and transparency. The work of educating students is viewed as a shared responsibility between the educator and instructional leader. District and school-level leadership must maintain a continued emphasis on providing the necessary supports and resources for professional learning to ensure continuous growth.

5. Communication through Collaborative Conversations

Communication between the district and school level leadership is critical to the overall operation of the system. Through a formal Collaborative Conversation process with each school leadership team, the

administration will focus school and district data, strategic plan goals and action step progress and efforts to improve outcomes for students. More specifically, school leadership teams will be asked probing questions requiring them to communicate understanding of their performance data, efforts central to continuous improvement and the role of their leadership team to effect positive change.

6. Measuring Performance Data & Monitoring Leading and Lagging Indicators

Principals and school leadership teams will conduct a comprehensive data analysis each nine weeks on targeted leading and lagging indicators. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction will provide a tool that teams use to report their data and conduct a self-reflection. With an emphasis on data-driven decision making, strategic plan goals and action steps must target identified deficiencies and root causes. School personnel are to be trained on and encouraged to use digital data sources as a means to identify systemic weaknesses and at-risk students.

7. Monitoring Focus on Strategic Goals & Implementation of Identified Action Steps

The district leadership team will work collaboratively with schools in updating their Strategic Plan and each school will be provided a follow-up feedback report prior to the “official” school submission. In addition, principals and school leadership teams will complete and submit a quarterly Strategic Plan Progress Report detailing the status of each action step and a narrative delineating implementation efforts. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction will provide a tool that teams use to report their progress and follow-up constructive feedback. The school level and district strategic plan is viewed as a fluid document with no beginning or end date.

8. Partnerships with the Community, Business and Industry

Schools will be encouraged to form partnerships with individuals within the community, business and industry. The learning environment will be enhanced considerably when done effectively. Links to the community and the family will be made to enhance the learning environment, raise the achievement level and provide and education in tune with the future. The learning environment will be designed and equipped to be a part of today’s and tomorrow’s technologies and computerized society.

Adopted: TBD