

Superintendent's Report

November 23, 2015

Chair David Jones, members of the Board; it is my pleasure to call your attention to a few items of special interest.

Let me add my personal congratulations and appreciation to Kathy Smith for her years of service to the District. Kathy is a critical thinker with a detail orientation and most importantly with the highest sense of integrity. Kathy — you will be missed. I wish you all the best in a new phase of your life.

Safety is always our number one priority. Feeling safe physically, socially, and emotionally is foundational to being able to concentrate on learning.

According to the Kentucky Center for School Safety, there have been about two dozen false threats across the state this month and last. There have also been a significant number in Tennessee and Ohio. And the Kentucky School Boards Association ran a national story a week or so ago that there have been more than 800 such incidents this school year.

We take every threat seriously. We will prosecute anyone involved in a false threat because of the significant loss to our instructional time.

The Code of Acceptable Behavior and Discipline is an important document — it sets the expectations for behavior throughout the District. It sets the consequences as well. Sometimes the consequence is placement in a Restorative School for behavior. Some of our students graduate from that alternative school.

We have structures in place for safety — locked doors, visitors sign in, lighting, and cameras, emergency protocols.

We have proactive supports in place — Positive Behavior Intervention Support, mental health counselors, trained School Resource Officers, and the Compassionate Schools Project.

Even when the consequence is suspension, and you can see that our students are receiving that as a consequence, we are working to help students LEARN from their behavioral choice and to REGAIN their academic footing. Our Board invested \$2.7 million in transition centers, adding 43 teachers on the secondary level, to give students an opportunity to "catch up" in a personalized setting — so that they never lose hope academically.

Safety as we transport students is important. We have 125 students with 5 or more referrals. There have been a total of 501 students with referrals. We transport 70,000 students a day. We have been in school 68 days. That makes 4,760,000 student rides to school and 4,760,000 student rides from school. Area superintendents and principals are meeting to "name and claim" those 125 students and put strategies in place.

One of our values states that "quality teaching is the most powerful tool". We are a people-powered organization. We are in the process of hiring and filling 24 teaching vacancies. That leaves us with only 24 vacancies in high needs areas — math, science, exceptional children's education, and English as a Second Language combined with a content area. That is 24 vacancies out of a teaching force of 6600 teachers — but each vacancy matters because it affects a classroom of students. We are working tirelessly to fill those remaining 24 vacancies.

Engaging students in learning is the most proactive strategy. I am happy to announce that from September to November, a mere three months, there have been nearly as many students benefiting from the experience of "going into space" than all of last year at the Challenger Center located at the Academy at Shawnee.

I want to give a shout-out to our biology teachers to help our students love science. Biology teachers were at Gheens Academy in professional development from 3-5:00 p.m. today.

Please visit our website to read all that JCPS stakeholders are thankful for — I am *#JCPSThankful* for 7 Board Members and 15,000 employees working to support 101,000 students.

Chair Jones, this concludes my report and my recommendation for approval of the consent agenda later in the meeting.