

Superintendent Shawn Dilly column

We are starting to see some of the results of our Transforming Mineral County Schools process and, while they are baby steps, the feedback from staff has been very encouraging.

The Teacher Advisory Committee that has been formed from teachers in all our schools met for the first time on Sept. 29 and had a very fruitful discussion as they plan for future meetings.

On Wednesday, Sept. 30, we had our first monthly early dismissal to allow for teaching staff in all of our schools to use the time for collaboration and planning efforts.

For some of our schools, especially the primary schools, this was not a novelty as they have been holding planning sessions throughout the day at their schools since the beginning of the year.

For others, the feedback was extremely promising, as teachers and principals commented, “this is great,” and “we should have been doing this all along.”

The current focus for the collaboration time is the strategic plan for each of the schools. Principals were primarily responsible for leading the discussions and each school had an agenda for the session.

At Fountain Primary, the school team focused on the school’s 2015-16 Strategic Plan and worked on detailing what should take place and how the school will make improvements to reach state, county and school goals. The emphasis is on student achievement and growth on the Smarter Balanced Assessment, according to Principal Roberta Unger.

At Wiley Ford Primary, the team reviewed policies and procedures, and reviewed the Strategic Plan with discussion and handouts. The group is working in teams to review sections of the plan and provide feedback. Reading is a top priority for the school while math was also discussed in terms of assessment and student progress. The group reviewed strategies for grade levels part of our efforts to provide continuity from grade to grade and from Pre-K to Primary to Middle School to High School.

At Keyser Middle School, teachers focused on their Strategic Plan review and a yearly plan for faculty development. The teachers talked about Self

Reflection as part of their evaluation system and goals for Special Education and System-wide Learning goals in complex text, analytical reading, and informative writing.

Keyser Primary School conducted a team discussion on several topics including the Strategic Plan, team assignments on the discipline plan, a writing plan, multi-cultural plan, and testing plan.

“We are working on our Strategic Plan and Monitoring Plan in our focus groups and then as a large group so we can send them to the county,” said Principal Joe Riley at Frankfort High School, of his school’s collaboration efforts.

Dawn Burke, principal at Fort Ashby Primary; Robin McDowell, principal of New Creek Primary; and Joyce Malcolm, principal at Burlington Primary, also conducted collaborations that included the schools’ strategic plans as well as other topics.

New Creek’s McDowell, for example, presided over a presentation by Brian Kerling, Potomac State College of WVU campus police, on Active Shooter Training, a timely program given recent news.

This is all good news as we see our staffs coming together to focus on educational improvements for our students. But, that isn’t all that is happening. We are reaching out to parents, businesses, and the community in a variety of ways.

In addition to the teachers’ advisory there is a community advisory group that has come together as a result of the Education Summit held at Keyser High School auditorium Center in May. Members of the summit panel, along with some others in the community, have morphed into the Mineral County Transformation Advisory Committee.

They have met once as a group and will be meeting again this week, Wednesday, Oct. 7. This second meeting will take place at Mineral County Technical Center. The agenda includes, among other topics, defining what career and post-secondary readiness means in terms of a profile of our graduates. They will also be looking at mastery for each skill area in the profile.

An initial goal is to establish a subcommittee to develop a draft work plan and meeting schedule for the group.

The committee is to have a co-chair who will join Beverly Steele of Burlington in moving the group forward. The co-chair will be chosen from among

the members at their meeting on Wednesday. There is also to be a joint meeting of this group and Teacher Advisory Committee at a future date to discuss the book “Deeper Learning,” by Monica Martinez and Dennis McGrath. This book is available in my office as is a list of other books that outline some of what we want to achieve in Mineral County, including “Creative Schools,” by Dr. Ken Robinson.

In addition to these committees, we have redesigned the Mineral County Schools Website and we believe it is much more user-friendly and provides a wide range of information on the county school system and its schools. It features photos of activities in the schools and our participation in community activities. In the near future, Mineral County Schools will also have a Facebook page where you can find additional information on school activities and upcoming events.

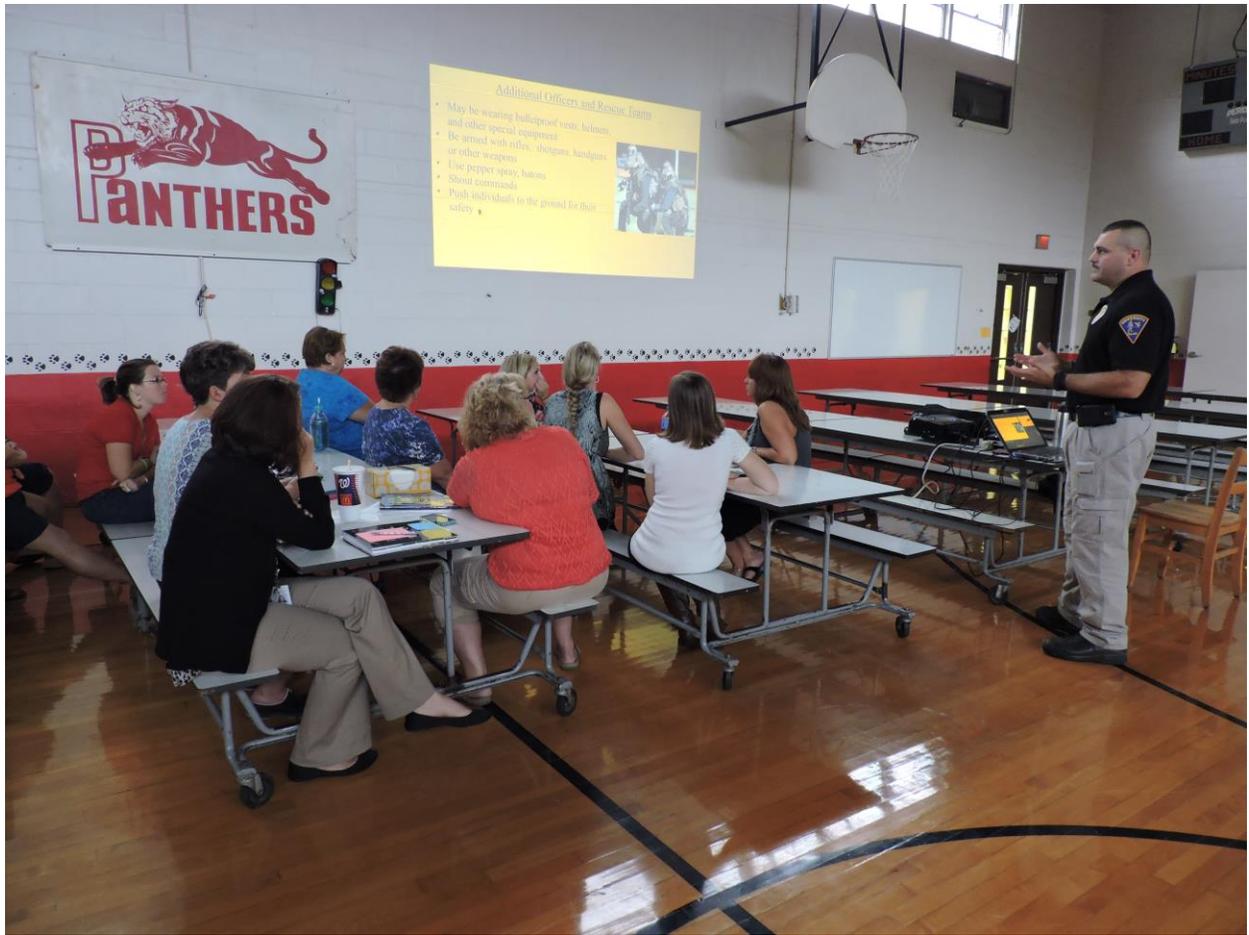
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PHOTOS

1. Keyser High School Principal Michael Lewis leads his staff in discussion on the first early dismissal day for teacher collaboration.
2. Keyser Primary School staff reviews school monitoring plan.
3. Elk Garden Principal Mr. (first name) Saturday leads his staff through their planning session on Sept. 30.
4. Brian Kerling presents a safety program (Active Shooter) at New Creek Primary School.
5. Burlington Primary Principal Joyce Malcolm leads discussion on the school’s Strategic Plan.







Additional Officers and Rescue Teams

- May be wearing bulletproof vests, helmets, and other special equipment
- Be armed with rifles, shotguns, handguns or other weapons
- Use pepper spray, batons
- Shout commands
- Push individuals to the ground for their safety



