

**Monroe County Board of Education**

**Special Meeting**

**September 11, 2018**

**Peterstown Middle /School**

I. Roll Call

- a. Mr. Wickline called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- b. Members present in addition to Keith Wickline were Danny Lively, Candy Sabol, Everett Fraley, and Sally Wallace.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Agenda/Adjustments

- a. Mr. Lively made the motion to approve the agenda as written. The vote to approve was unanimous.

IV. Public Hearing Pursuant to WVDE Policy 6204 on the Closure of Peterstown Middle School (No action to be taken.)

- a. Jason Long, Attorney, spoke as counsel for the Board. This hearing is for closure of Peterstown Middle School. This is a required public hearing and no action will be taken tonight. This is for the Board to hear information and consider the closing of the school to be effective at the end of the 2019-2020 school year.
- b. Mr. Long stated a recommendation would be made to the board at the conclusion of the hearings that the two schools be closed. Administration is required to prepare reasons of proposed closing. Those have been provided to principals, LSICs, and were made available at the superintendent's office 30 days prior to meeting. Timelines and documents have been deemed legal and compliant and counsel will ensure tonight and tomorrow night's meetings and procedures are legal. Each speaker will be given no more than 5 minutes. The Board is here tonight to listen. They are in the informational stage and again are here to listen only. Any questions are geared toward administration. Everyone here is asked to be respectful. Any written statements will be copied and provided to board members. A summary of comments must also be provided to the West Virginia State Board Members. All speakers are asked to go to the podium and speak into the microphone so everyone can hear.
- c. The conclusion of the process is tomorrow at the end of the meeting at Peterstown Elementary School. The meeting will be recorded

- d. Ashley Williams, grade seven Science teacher at PMS, asks that the schools be closed. Her class is very hot and windows do not open all the way. The room is too small to have adequate science labs. Classroom conditions are poor, with students sitting on stools on a wooden floor which makes noise causing it hard to keep students focused. The floor is warped and the waves in it makes speed and velocity labs nearly impossible. The class is often taken to the hallway. The classroom has only one working sink and drain for all students, causing some to go downstairs to the restrooms.

Students bring her items to hold for students on crutches while they travel the steps to class because the school does not have an elevator. She is concerned about safety since there is not an elevator. Students with disabilities are not able to get to her class. Limited equipment is in the room, and the equipment is old.

Mrs. Williams' three children are required to be outside the school going from class to class in the elements at Peterstown Elementary School. She encourages the Board to vote to close the schools and help get a new school for the children.

- e. Wayne Spangler has taught at PES for 37 years and is Faculty Senate Chair. He reminded the board that the middle school was formally Peterstown High School. He commends the board for the upkeep of the schools. The outside looks wonderful but the inside is not adequate. Students deserve a state of the art school with greater educational opportunities. All teachers under one roof would provide better educational learning opportunities. Available technology in the county is difficult to access in the old building. Mr. Spangler urges the Board to close both schools for the betterment of the students.

- f. Karsyn Dusold, grade seven teacher at PMS and a former student of PES, PMS, and JMHS, stated that our students deserve better opportunities and more opportunities that other counties receive. Her classroom is very hot, with the temperature unbearable. She has had class in the hallway and on the lawn to avoid air conditioning issues. She has literally seen heat rising off student desks. Students complain daily about the temperature in the room. She has a PreK child and is expecting another child. Some students only have a safe place at school to escape their bad home lives. They need a safer place at school than home and often that is not provided in these old buildings. Only so much can be done to repair the buildings and we should give students the best. She urges the Board to vote to close the schools.

- g. Sabrina Stutts is a parent and former student of PES and PMS. She

believes the upkeep is as good as can be, but believes the building needs replaced.

The building is not handicapped accessible. Handicapped students can only access one restroom at the far end of the hallway because others have stairs. Some students can't maneuver stairs, and there is not an elevator.

Children are shuttled outside in the elements to get to classes every period of the day. There are personal safety issues caused by crossing a public road and other issues that can arise from that. We want to think we live in a safe place but who knows when something is going to happen to one of the children. Doors are locked on the main building but the classroom across the street causes much concern. Students are freezing in one classroom and cold in the next classroom. The gym often reaches over 100 degrees. It is more costly to repair the two schools than to build a new school. There is not enough tax base to build a school without assistance from the School Building Authority. If the board fails to close the schools, it is a disservice to students and community as a whole. Mrs. Stutts urged the board to vote to close the schools.

- h. Donna Jones, substitute cook, aide, and custodian, has to carry mops up steps, as there are no mop closets upstairs. Downstairs drains are clogged so custodians must carry water outside to discard. The floor is not level and sometimes when mopping upstairs the water runs down into the lower level classrooms. She believes the county needs a new school. Ms. Jones is a graduate of Peterstown and will always be a Pirate.

- i. Angela Mann urged passage to close both schools. She has already said many things to the board that she will restate tonight and feels the new school is needed. This has been a four year process and she knows everyone cannot be pleased. We have educated the public and the public knows we need a new school. The problem is that we won't get a new school if the vote is not passed to close the old schools. Guidelines have been followed. It is the right thing to vote yes on closure. Mrs. Mann believes it is obvious that a new school is needed as the board has heard from many tonight.

Both schools were built in 1950 and have constant problems, such as heating and cooling. People often ask why the gym is not air conditioned. The building is not ADA compliant thus a student who is in a wheelchair cannot get upstairs. There are constant humidity issues so dehumidifiers run in every classroom with papers getting wet from the humidity in the building. Plumbing and sewer issues are a constant battle. The outer building is currently closed because of bat presence in the building. Orkin has been called to remove the bats and clean the area. The building is very old and space is not adequate. We need modern facilities. Volunteers have

painted in an attempt to try to spruce up the building but there is only so much that can be done. Restrooms need remodeled as painting has not helped. There is a water leak in the boys' restroom with urinals blasting water into the room.

Every state report shows write-ups with state level agencies such as SBA, OEPA, acknowledging the need for a new school. Twenty-five percent of the principal's day is spent on maintenance issues. Five to ten orders or more per day are entered for maintenance work and it is too much for maintenance to keep up with. There are many different systems in the building. Some parts can't be found to repair things, for example the boiler because it is so old. Mrs. Mann has worked at MVS and did not have as many maintenance issues.

The state is leading us to believe we have a good change to receive 21 million dollars. The county has had two bonds elections that failed and she feels we have a better plan in place now. If we do not close the schools now, timelines will be useless and the process must begin again. Mrs. Mann does not feel that a bond will pass in Monroe County. She hears comments about other schools, like when we built this school should have had this or that but current administration can't change what was done years ago. She doesn't like the MVS setup for K-8 but feels we can work with the architects and planning teams to develop the best school for students. She is interested in meeting with board members, students, etc. to design the new school. She urges the Board to vote to pass to close the schools.

- j. Lane Mann had nothing to say about the closure of schools, but had a question about the new school.
- k. DeJuana Mills, parent, has a son now at PMS. She is concerned about safety issues, such as students crossing roads, the playground in the middle of parking lot, detached buildings, etc. She states that we need to keep our students safe. As the board heard tonight this is their safe place. She suggests that if you give a brand new building to a teacher, they can win the world. Teachers deserve new equipment with which to teach. The buildings have done what they were supposed to do and it is now our job to stand up for kids who do not have a voice. She believes this is an urgent matter and it's time to change for the community. Mrs. Mills strongly urged the Board to close the two schools. She urged the Board to put kids first. She has been to several meetings and has spoken and she again urged the Board to vote for closing of the schools.
- l. John Spangler, has been a custodian at both schools for a total of ten years. He states that pipes are so rusty that a trash can has sat under a leak for a

month because they were afraid the pipe would flood the school if it were cut to repair. Students walked around the trash can while they waited on a part to fix the pipe. He does a daily check on sewer system and stirs it when the pipes are clogged so it won't back up into the school. Electricity is a concern. We have screw in fuses and this limits what you can do in the building. Technology has changed. The former high school shop was converted to computer lab and does not have enough electricity. He stated that you cannot take a small car and convert it into a large truck. He believes that is what we are dealing with at this school. You can't take something this old and make it what students need today.

There is some talk about building cosmetics, etc. All we should talk about is the educational environment. There is little economic growth in the county so we are losing enrollment. Declining enrollment is also due to not attracting families because the facilities are so old. Our schools offer the best education they can. My children are successful because of Monroe County Schools. Students need to be put first. It does not matter where the school is located, we just need an A1 facility for students. Students need to be taught technology and we need to ensure that that is happening.

Teachers try to conduct an experiment but humidity is too bad to get results. Sometimes it is so humid the mop buckets won't slide up and down the halls. The vote to close has to happen to promote economic growth. We have bright kids, and want them to stay here. Mr. Spangler offered to show the board anything they might want to see in either building. Issues are such that we cannot put a band-aid on them. He is working with the Rural Economic Development Board for business and urged the Board to close both schools.

- m. Nellie Cottle serves both PES and PMS as the Technology Integrated Specialist. She loves her job and commends Mrs. Tuggle for the 1:1 technology initiative. Mrs. Cottle teaches responsible use of technology. She also teaches students STEM hands on problem solving. These building are very difficult for teaching and learning. The technology infrastructure is not adequate. There are not enough outlets so extension cords must be used, which the fire marshal says we cannot do. Mrs. Cottle states that the county cannot wait any longer, She asks the board to please use the money being offered to construct a new school.
- n. Zach Elmore is a student teacher at Peterstown Middle in Mrs. Putnam classroom. He states that the conditions of the school are a disservice to the students. We can strive to do better for our students. Teachers and administrators can only do so much. He aspires to teach someday, loves the sense of community, but would love to teach in a new school. He would like to see the same opportunities for students in Peterstown as are

offered in Union.

- o. Jason Long spoke again to say that concluded the hearing portion of the meeting as there were no others who signed up or asked to speak. He requested that any written material to be considered be brought forward so that copies could be made for board members. There were none.
- p. Keith Wickline asked if there were any other comments to be made. There were none. He reminded the group of the meeting the next night at Peterstown Elementary School.

V. Adjournment

- a. Mr. Fraley made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. The vote to approve was unanimous.



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President



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Secretary